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THE

HISTORY OF ENGLAND

DURING

THE THIRTY YEARS' PEACE:

1816—1846.

BY HARRIET MARTINEAU.

VOL. II.

1830—1846.

LONDON:
CHARLES KNIGHT, 90, FLEET STREET.

1850.

Trent University Library
PETERBOROUGH, ONT.

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LONDON:
A. SWEETING, PRINTER, BARTLETT'S BUILDINGS.

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HISTORY OF ENGLAND

DURIN

THE THIRTY YEARS' PEACE.

BOOK IV.

CHAPTER I.

1830.

THE valetudinarian King was gone, with his moods and caprices: and with him went all the considerations of expediency which had determined the political conduct of the year, on every side. It was not now necessary to have the most peremptory man in the empire to hold its first office, for the purpose of keeping its sovereign in order. There was no longer an incessant appeal to the generosity of the three bodies in Opposition to abstain from joining to throw out the Ministry. There need no longer be a mere show of transacting business, while in reality nothing was done — through the mechanical character of the Administration on the one hand, and the desultory forbearance of the Opposition on the other. It was no longer necessary that the country should be without a government in fact, while the nation was kindling and stirring under the news from France, which became more interesting every day. There was now a King who did not shut himself up with his discontents and his flatterers, but who walked in London streets with his umbrella under his arm, and gave a frank and sailor-like greeting to all old acquaintances, whoever they might be. There was no longer a King who regarded every contravention of his prejudices as a personal injury; but one who sincerely and kindly desired the welfare of his people, without any regard to his personal feelings. He gave an immediate and strong proof of this by continuing the Duke of Wellington and his colleagues in power, notwithstanding a well-understood personal disinclination, and from the pure desire not to unsettle public affairs till the national will should have shown itself in the elections. He had not been many days on the throne, when he took the opportunity, at some public collation, of proposing the Duke of Wellington's health, and declaring, in a manner more well meant than dignified, that it was a mistake to suppose that he had any ill-feeling—any feeling but of entire confidence in his good friend, the Duke of Wellington. A steady man, of determined will, he certainly did require, as head of his government, as every British sovereign must, in days when

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sovereigns have little power, and scanty means of knowledge of the national mind and needs: and in this case, the sovereign was at no time a man of ability, and often liable to attacks of incapacitating illness; and he was sixty-five years of age: but he was honest, unselfish, and earnestly desirous to do his duty well: so that the steadiness of his Prime Minister was required, n to control him, but to inform, and guide, and aid him in the fulfilment of his function. There was in no direction any necessity for the Wellington Ministry to remain in power, unless by the wish of the nation: and what the desire of the nation was, the elections would soon show.

King's Message.

Hansard, xxv. 706.

The late King had died on the 26th of June. On the 29th, William IV. sent down his first Message to Parliament—just after the unhappy King of France had addressed his last words to his people, and while the elections were proving that he had lost all. King William's Message, after adverting to the loss sustained by himself and the nation, declared his opinion that the sooner the necessary new elections took place the better, and recommended the Commons to make provision, without delay, for the maintenance of the public service during the interval between the close of the present session and the meeting of the new parliament.

Regency Question.

This was very well, as far as it went; but it struck every body on the instant that there was an enormous omission. The King was childless; and the Princess Victoria, who was to succeed him, if he died without heirs, was only eleven years old. Without express provision, there is no recognition by the law of the minority of a sovereign; and if the King should die before the new parliament met, this child would be sovereign without control, unless some provision were made for a regency. Something must be done about this, many members of both Houses and of all parties said; but they took a day to consider how they should proceed. On this first day, they spoke merely on that part of the Message which related to the death of the late King—the Duke of Wellington's motion in reply being seconded by Lord Grey, and Sir Robert Peel's by Mr. Brougham. All was thus far civility and harmony; a civility and harmony which endured for that day only.

On the 30th, Lord Grey in the one House, and Lord Althorp in the other, moved for the delay of a day in replying to the Message, in the understood hope that the King would send down a request to parliament to consider the subject of a regency. The grounds on which the Ministers resisted this proposition were such as now excite astonishment. They talked of the excellence of the King's health, of "not indulging in such gloomy forebodings," of this not being a matter of pressing necessity, and of its being so important in its nature that it should be left for the deliberation of a new parliament, instead of being brought forward when the minds of members were occupied with their approaching election conflicts:—the fact remaining clear to all men's minds, that by an overturn of the King's carriage, or a fall of his horse, or the slipping of his foot, or an attack of illness, the country might be plunged into inextricable difficulty, from which the legislation of a day or two now might save it. The Dukes of Newcastle and Richmond, Lords Wellesley and Londonderry, and even Lord Eldon, voted with Lord Grey, though the Duke had said that he should regard a defeat as the signal for the dissolution of the Ministry. The Ministry, however, obtained a majority of 44 in the House of

Hansard, xxv. 767.

Peers, and of 46 in the Commons. The general conviction resulting from this affair was that all compromise was now over; that the Duke was laying aside his method of balancing the sections of Opposition against each other, and intending to try his strength, while the Opposition no longer thought it necessary to spare him. Mr. Brougham lost no time in taking out in full the license which he had of late, on the whole, denied himself, and on this night used language and excited uproar which deprived the opponents of Parliamentary Reform of their plea of the dignity and decorum of the House as then constituted. Some one having complained of "a peculiar cry" (whether a baa, a bray, or a grunt, Hansard does not say)—a "peculiar cry which was heard amidst the cheers of the House," Mr. Brougham observed that "by a wonderful disposition of nature, every animal had its peculiar mode of expressing itself; and he was too much of a philosopher to quarrel with any of those modes." And presently after, he called up Sir Robert Peel to a personal altercation, by saying, after a reference to the Duke of Wellington, "Him I accuse not. It is you I accuse—his flatterers—his mean, fawning parasites." Such quarrels are always got rid of with more or less quibbling and ill grace: but it should be noted that they did occur before the great opening of the representation which was now near at hand. Much was said by the enemies of Parliamentary Reform of the vulgarity of manners which would certainly show itself in the House when the manufacturing towns were represented: but at this time it was the complaint of strangers who attended the debates, that not only violence of language was occasionally very great, but that offensive noises—the braying, baaing, crowing, mewing of animals—were ventured upon and tolerated in the House to an extent which would not be thought of in any other association assembled for grave purposes.

MANNERS OF THE COMMONS.

Hansard, xxv. 825.

The King's answer to the Address contained no allusion to the subject of a Regency; nor did he make any reference to it in any form. The omission was daring; but nobody doubted that the Ministers pressed upon him, as upon Parliament, the consideration of "a great present inconvenience" being of more consequence than "a remote future risk:" and the King did not die during the recess, so as to put the fallacy to the proof. How much he thought of dying during those weeks, and whether he felt like a family man who is prevented by vexatious accidents from making his will, and who grows nervous about his personal safety till the thing is done, there is no knowing: but the matter was discussed with deep interest in the homes of the land—children and adults wondering whether the little Princess was aware of her position—whether, if the King were now to die, she would have the sense to desire a regency for some years, or whether she would choose to rule according to her own pleasure;—and if so, what kind of persons she would select for her ministers. There was another consideration uppermost in all minds, and largely concerned in the question, though it could not be openly spoken of in Parliament. After the King's death, the Duke of Cumberland would be her eldest uncle. He must succeed to the crown of Hanover, which descends only to male heirs. Would he go to Hanover and stay there, and let England alone? To say that the Duke of Cumberland was unpopular throughout the empire would be to use language too feeble for the fact. He was hated; and hated with that mixture of fear which belongs to total disesteem. It was

Hansard, xxv. 761.

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widely felt that the Princess would not be safe, if unprotected by a regency on ascending the throne in childhood: and it was generally believed that the nation would not submit to any kind or degree of rule, governance, or influence, from the Duke of Cumberland. This being the state of the royal family, and the warning condition of France being before all eyes, it was an act of extraordinary rashness in the Ministry to insist on the dissolution of parliament before any provision had been made for a Regency.

Prorogation.

Hansard, xxv. 1315.

It was carefully pointed out, when the King came down to prorogue parliament, that he appeared to be in excellent health. There was something exhilarating in the sight of a King, in excellent health, coming down with an open face and frank demeanour, to meet his parliament. He wore his admiral's uniform under the royal robes. There was not much in his Speech; for the session did not supply much matter. The most important point was that with which the Speech concluded; an expression of his desire that, as parliament had declared its will that civil distinctions on account of religious opinion should cease, his subjects universally should join with him in promoting peace, and burying all such differences in oblivion.

Dissolution.

The next day, July 24th, parliament was dissolved by proclamation; and in a few hours the bustle of the new elections began. In a few days, some of them were actually decided: for the writs were made returnable on the 14th of September.

Sympathy with France.

The people of England, Scotland, and Ireland, met together in crowds for other purposes than electing their representatives. By this time, the three days in Paris were over: the French people had thrown off the Polignac tyranny, and the English were not slow to congratulate them. Public meetings were held in counties and towns to prepare addresses for this purpose; and a long file of deputations crossed the Channel to present these addresses in Paris. At these meetings men spoke to each other, in high exhilaration, of the bearing of these French events upon their own political affairs. They pointed out to each other how the representation was the central ground of struggle; and how victory there was total victory. They agreed upon the powerlessness of Kings, Cabinets, and armies, when in opposition to the popular will: and all who were in any degree on the liberal side in politics saw that now was the time to secure that Reform of Parliament which was a necessary condition of all other political reforms. That was a stirring time in England. Again, the men of the towns went out early in the summer mornings, or late at night, to meet the mails; and brought news to the breakfast table, or to the eager listeners round the lamp, that Paris was in a state of siege;—that the Parisians had taken Paris;—that the French King was coming to England;—that the Chambers had met at the appointed time, as if no impediment had arisen;—that the tricolour had been seen in the Thames, and that the Duke of Wellington, riding along the wharves, had turned away his head from the sight with unconcealed anger and mortification;—that, though the King had called the Duke his friend, it was clear that we could not have an intimate of Prince Polignac for our Prime Minister;—that almost the whole newspaper press of England was hostile to the present administration;—and, finally, that the men of Yorkshire had sent such a requisition to Harry Brougham to become their representative as left scarcely a doubt of his triumphant return;—a portentous sign of the times, if such should be the issue.

Mr. Brougham.

There is something very affecting to those who were of mature years at that time in looking back upon these glories of the Harry Brougham who was the hope and admiration of so large a portion of the liberal body in the nation. As he himself said, he had now arrived at the pinnacle of his fame: he had attained an honour which could never be paralleled. When he said this, he did not contemplate decline; nor did those who listened to him; nor did the liberal party generally. Those who did were some close observers who had never had confidence in him, and who knew that sobriety of thought and temperance of feeling were essential to success in a commanding position, though they might not be much missed in one of struggle and antagonism. These observers, who had seen that with all his zeal, his strong spirit of pugnacity, his large views of popular rights and interests, Henry Brougham gave no evidences of magnanimity, patience, moderation, and self-forgetfulness, felt now, as throughout his course, that power would be too much for him, and that his splendid talents were likely to become conspicuous disgraces. This was what was soon to be tried: and in the interval, he stood, in these times of popular excitement, the first man in England;—called by the popular voice to represent the first constituency in England, in a season when constituencies and their chosen representatives were the most prominent objects in the nation's eye. Mr. Brougham had been twenty-one years in public life: his endowments were the most splendid conceivable, short of the inspiration of genius; and they had been, thus far, employed on behalf of popular interests. Men thought of his knowledge and sagacity on colonial affairs—shown early in his career: they thought of his brave and faithful advocacy of the Queen's cause: they thought of his labours for popular enlightenment—of his furtherance of Mechanics' Institutes, of the London University, and of the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge:—they thought of his plans for the reform of the law, and his labours in making justice accessible to the poor: they thought of his mighty advocacy of the claims of the slave, and of his thundering denunciations of oppression in that and every other relation; and they reasonably regarded him as a great man, and the hope of his country. It was so reasonable to regard him thus, that those who had misgivings were ashamed of them, and concealed them so anxiously that it is certain that Mr. Brougham had as fair a field as any man ever had for showing what he could do. But, though those who knew him best concealed their doubts, the doubts were there;—doubts whether his celebrated oratory was not mainly factitious — vehement and passionate, but not simple and heartfelt;—doubts whether a temper of jealousy and irritability would not poison any work into which it could find entrance;—doubts whether a vanity so restless and insatiable must not speedily starve out the richest abilities;—doubts whether a habit of speech so exaggerated, of statements so inaccurate, would not soon be fatal to respect and confidence;—doubts about the perfect genuineness of his popular sympathies—not charging him with hypocrisy, but suspecting that the people were an object in his imagination, rather than an interest in his heart—a temporary idol to him, as he was to them. These doubts made the spectacle of Henry Brougham at the head of the representation of Great

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Yorkshire Election.

Britain an interesting and anxious one to those who knew him well, whether from personal intercourse or from a close study of his career. With all the other liberals of England, it was an occasion of unbounded triumph. He has since publicly and repeatedly referred to this period as that of his highest glory; and there are now none, probably, who do not agree with him. At this Yorkshire election, when four representatives were required, five candidates came forward, and Mr. Brougham stood next to Lord Morpeth, who headed the poll.

New House.

A very few days were enough to show the Ministers what they had to expect from the new House. The Tory magnates whom they had offended by their liberal measures, took this opportunity of revenging themselves, and returned members opposed to them, who, though not liberals, served the purposes of the liberals nearly as well as if they had been comrades. Two brothers and a brother-in-law of Sir Robert Peel were thrown out. Mr. Hume came in for the county of Middlesex, while the Duke of Newcastle was causing the return of members hostile to the Ministry. Their faithful friend the Duke of Rutland could not carry the county of Cambridge; and Lord Ebrington was returned for Devonshire. No cabinet Minister obtained a seat by anything like open and popular election. Of the eighty-two county members, only twenty-eight were avowedly on the ministerial side, while forty-seven were avowedly on the other side. Of the twenty-eight members representing the greatest cities, three were ministerialists, and twenty-four liberals. Such being the state of things where the elections were open and popular, and the proprietors of close boroughs being still steady anti-catholics, the fate of the Ministry was sealed, and known to be so, before the summer was over. Even the revolutions on the continent, now following one another with a rapidity which, at a different time, would have pressed all the Conservatives in England into close union, had not at present that effect. The great soldier, the peremptory commander, the Iron Duke, must be got rid of; and then, all good Conservatives would join at once, and see what must be done to save the Church and the State The Ministry, on their part, hoped to effect some good understanding in the interval betwixt August and November. In September, an event occurred which seemed to open some prospect of this; though the Ministers themselves were too much touched and grieved at heart to think of such a result so soon as some of their less interested adherents.

Death of Mr. Huskisson.

The first great English railway was completed, and the line from Liverpool to Manchester was opened on Wednesday, the 15th of September. The Duke of Wellington, Sir Robert Peel, and other great men, arrived to take part in the ceremony, which was to have been succeeded by a banquet, at Manchester. Mr. Huskisson was already on the spot, having arrived, as soon as the state of his feeble health permitted it, to visit the constituency of Liverpool, who had elected him in his absence. Before the trains left Liverpool, a particular request was made that none of the company would leave the carriages, and the printed bills exhibited a caution to the same effect; but when the trains stopped at Parkside, several of the party alighted, and a mutual friend of the Duke of Wellington and Mr. Huskisson thought that this would be a good opportunity for bringing them together, and putting an end to the coolness which had existed between them since Mr. Huskisson's dismissal from the cabinet.

Both parties were willing and cordial. When the Duke saw Mr. Huskisson approaching, he advanced and held out his hand; and almost before the friendly grasp was loosened, some one took alarm at the approach of a locomotive, and there was a general cry to those who were standing in the road, "get in, get in!" If Mr. Huskisson had stood still beside the car, he would have been safe. Whether, feeble and nervous from illness, he was attempting to get round the open door of the car, in order to enter it, or whether he was merely holding by it, appears not to be known. The event was that the open door by which he held was struck by the locomotive, and threw down Mr. Huskisson, who fell, with his leg doubled across the rail, so that the limb was instantly crushed. He was at once aware that the accident was fatal, and he died that night, at the parsonage at Eccles, where he was conveyed with all skill and tenderness. The Ministers were in no spirits for further public exhibition that day, and they would fain have withdrawn; but it was represented to them how serious would be the public alarm in such a place as Manchester; how report would exaggerate the mischief if they were not seen; and how fatal might even be the effect on future railway travelling of a false panic that day; and they consented to proceed. All was now gloom, and the chief guests refused to leave the car at Manchester, or do more than the public safety required.

It was not they who immediately began to consider what effect this mournful death would have on their political position; but, as was natural, there were many who did. The "Canningites" would now merge into another party. For some time there had been no sufficient peculiarity of doctrine or principle to necessitate their forming a separate party; and that they did stand aloof, was owing to the state of feeling between the Duke and Mr. Huskisson. That was all over now. There was no quarrel which survivors ought to keep alive; and it was hoped that the Grants and Lord Palmerston would strengthen the Ministry in the Lower House. It was too late for this, however. The Ministry had done their utmost, and in vain, to exclude Mr. Charles Grant from Inverness; and Mr. Robert Grant had thrown out a brother of Sir Robert Peel's at Norwich. The few remaining "Canningites" advanced towards liberalism from this day. The only hope now was that the bringing forward of the parliamentary reform question in revolutionary times would alarm all but the extreme Liberals into union at the last moment.

Up to the last moment, indeed, matters looked gloomy enough. In October the Viceroy of Ireland, Sir Henry Hardinge, issued a proclamation intended to prevent the meeting of an Association for promoting the Repeal of the Union. The prohibition was positive and comprehensive; but British governments, and British officials, did not yet know Daniel O'Connell; how impossible it was to restrain him by law in the prosecution of his enterprises, or to have dealings with him, as between man and man. Daniel O'Connell issued his proclamations forthwith, in which he arraigned "that paltry, contemptible, little English soldier, that had the audacity to put his pitiful and contemptible name to an atrocious Polignac proclamation;" and laid down the law about obtaining the Repeal of the Union. He declared, as he continued to declare to the end of his life, that the Repeal of the Union was just at hand, and that "no power on earth could prevent it, except the folly or the crimes of some of

Annual Register, 1830, Chron. 174.

O'CONNELL AND THE VICEROY.

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Dublin Freeman's Journal, Oct. 23, 1830.

the Irish themselves." He proposed "that a society should be formed to meet in Dublin, to be called the Association of Irish Volunteers; the motto of the society to be '1782,' over the word 'Resurgam.' The members were to be unarmed, open in all their proceedings, and to be active, in the first place, in procuring petitions from every parish in Ireland in behalf of Repeal of the Union. In the course of his speeches and proclamations on this matter, Mr. O'Connell used language with regard to Sir H. Hardinge, for which he was called to account by that gentleman. A recurrence to this fact seems to take us back to a distant time indeed; all modern recollections of O'Connell being such as to attach an idea of ridicule to any person resenting his foulness of language. On this occasion he behaved as disgracefully as possible, shuffling about what expressions he did or did not use, and refusing to accept a challenge. There cannot be a finer spectacle in our time than an honourable man refusing to fight a duel, from a conviction of the sin and folly of that kind of ordeal in a Christian nation and a modern age. But then it is essential that he be an honourable man, observing the Christian rule of doing as he would be done by, and peaceable and inoffensive, as truly brave and considerate men always are. It was far otherwise with O'Connell: he was the bully all over; the most foul-mouthed railer of his time; and, till men left off calling him to account, he always fell back upon his conscientious objection to duelling. He indulged in offence, and then made a merit of declining the penalty. As his sons grew up, he permitted them, two or three times, to fight his duels for him; but the public cry of disgust and indignation was so strong, that he at length forbade his sons to fight in his quarrels, and made a merit out of that. The correspondence on occasion of this offence to Sir H. Hardinge settles the matter for ever about O'Connell's honour, and the possibility of having dealings with him, as between man and man; and it is referred to here as an evidence that all parties who afterwards courted him, or allied themselves with him, more or less, for whatever political purposes, were not entitled to complain when he betrayed, insulted, and reviled them. That any terms should have been held with O'Connell, by governments, English public, or gentlemen, in or out of parliament, after his present agitation for Repeal, and his published correspondence with Sir H. Hardinge's aide, in October, 1830, is one of the moral disgraces of our time. It shows that a man's abilities and political influence can secure to him an impunity for bullying, cowardice, and falsehood, which would drive a man of meaner talents and power from any society in the land. It is at this time that we find first recorded that expression of O'Connell's which he used, with the utmost freedom of application, for the rest of his life. The administration was "base, bloody, and brutal:" and henceforward, every law, every cabinet, every person, and every party, that he objected to, was "base, bloody, and brutal;" and it really appears as if every successive party to whom the epithets were applied winced under them as if they had never been used before, or as if they carried any weight.

Annual Register, 1830; Chron. 176—178.

Repeal of the Union.

Our country and our time have, since this date, rung with the Irish cry of "Repeal of the Union!" and this seems the occasion on which to look and see what it means. There are many in France and Germany, and a multitude in America, who would be surprised that any question could be made as to the meaning of that cry. They suppose the case to be plain enough; that

England conquered Ireland, and has ever since oppressed her; draining her of her produce, insulting her religion, being indifferent to her discontents, and careless of her woes. They suppose that the entire Irish people wish to be wholly separated from England, and insist that a nation which desires to live by itself, and to govern itself, should be allowed to do so. Of course, they believe that the reason why England does not let Ireland go, is that the territorial possession and its produce are of consequence to England. Such was the story told by O'Connell to the world; though it is utterly impossible that he could have believed it himself. He had too much warrant in history for some of his complaints. It was true that Ireland had once been fiercely conquered and cruelly oppressed; that, till now, her Catholic population had been bitterly insulted by exclusion from political rights on account of their faith; that the Church of seven-eighths of her people was still insulted by the presence of an established episcopal Church, and endowed Protestant Meeting Houses; and that a large proportion of her people were in a condition of political discontent, and intolerable social misery. Thus much was true; but O'Connell, in his addresses to the ignorant among his countrymen, and to the world abroad, never failed to cast the blame of ancient tyranny on the existing generation; never failed to impute the purely social miseries of Ireland to political causes; never failed to suppress the fact that Ireland had any imperial rights at all, or to throw contempt and ridicule on benefits which he could not ignore; never held forth to his countrymen the means of welfare which they had in their power, if they would but use them; and, above all, never made the slightest rational attempt to show how the Repeal of the Union would cure their woes, and give them peace and comfort. Any one who studies his speeches, as a series, may see that he knew the truth, from the directions in which he levels his vituperation and his sarcasm. He certainly knew that the miserable tenure of land, and multiplication of a destitute population, were the chief causes of the miseries of Ireland, and that, as a natural consequence, the people would not work and were prone to outrage. He certainly knew that these evils could not be cured by a parliament sitting in Dublin. He certainly knew that the great majority of the people of Ireland, including nearly all persons of education and property, were averse to a Repeal of the Union, and did not choose that it should take place. He certainly knew that such a complexity of interests had grown up between England and Ireland during their imperial connexion as made separation impossible, and that the interests of Great Britain would no more permit her to have for an independent neighbour an insular nation in a state of desperate and reckless misery (as Ireland would be if left to her own turbulence and poverty), than her conscience would permit her to cast off from her protection a people whom she had formerly helped to make miserable. From O'Connell's speeches, during a course of years, it is clear that he well knew all these things; yet it was his custom to speak (when on Irish ground) as if all the Irish desired Repeal—as if the Dublin parliament would truly represent the Irish people; as if Irish industry would thrive when commerce with England should be stopped; as if Repeal would give to every man for his own the land he lived on; as if Irish turbulence were merely the result of English provocation; and as if all had been well in Ireland till the British connexion began, and would be immediately well again if that connexion could be

1830. dissolved. As for the reasons why any man should plead such a cause in such a way, they seem clear enough in this case. Among the ignorant of his own countrymen, and uninformed foreigners, he obtained credence enough to give him great power; and this power sustained him in his chosen career as an agitator in Ireland. Moreover, he believed, and truly, that it gave him great importance in England; great power of annoyance to the government; great power of obstruction in parliament; a power of intimidation which he could take up at any time when he had an object to gain for himself or his country. He raised the Repeal cry whenever any benefit to Ireland was moved for, to hasten it, as he thought; and again, whenever it was granted, to save the awkwardness of acknowledgment; and he raised it in the autumn of every year—unless some other cry was abroad which would spare this for once—when the O'Connell Rent was to be collected. As for the question of Repeal itself, let us see how it stands, apart from the prejudice which O'Connell connected with it.

People had different opinions about what the effect would be in Ireland of granting measures which had been too long delayed. When the Duke of Wellington was proposing Catholic Emancipation, he said, at his own table, at a ministerial dinner, "It is a bad business; but we are aground." Lord Sidmouth asked, "Does your Grace think, then, that this concession will tranquillize Ireland?" "I can't tell. I hope it will," the Duke replied. He shortly discovered and owned his mistake. The Duke was no philosopher, to be sure; but, if he had been, he would have seen that the union itself, though working well on the whole, worked very slowly, because it had been too long delayed. And this other great measure, being much too long delayed, could not be expected to "tranquillize Ireland," so as to gratify the eyes of existing statesmen with the spectacle of tranquillity.

Life of Lord Sidmouth, iii. 425.

The slightest observation of Ireland, and the most superficial knowledge of her history, must convince every one, that if she had been an independent kingdom from 1782, or earlier, she would have been from that time in a state of misery and ruin which could not have been allowed in any civilized quarter of the world, either for her own sake or that of her neighbours. The civil wars of her factions, and the hunger of her swarming multitudes, must presently have destroyed her as a nation. If she had been up to this time an ally, or self-governing province of Great Britain, instead of being incorporated with her, her ruin could hardly have been less complete. In such a case, it is impossible to prevent the weaker going to the wall. It is impossible to prevent more or less abuse of power by the stronger party, and to obviate the jealousy or sycophancy of the leading men of the weaker, who make their own people their prey. We have a picture of Scotland, before and after the Union, which may enlighten us much in regard to the case of Ireland, though Scotland never was subject to the worst economical evils of Ireland; economical evils which are the true cause of her miseries, and which can be remedied only by her intimate connexion with a country of superior industrial condition and habits.

Edinburgh Review, Oct. 1827.

"If any one doubts," says an eminent Scotchman, "of the wretchedness of an unequal and unincorporating alliance, of the degradation of being subject to a provincial parliament and a distant king, and of the efficacy of a substantial union in curing all these evils, he is invited to look to the obvious example of Scotland. When the crowns only were united, and the governments continued separate, the weaker country was the scene of the most atrocious cruelties, the most violent injustice, and the most degrading oppressions. The prevailing religion of the people was proscribed and persecuted, with a ferocity greater than has ever been systematically exercised, even in Ireland; her industry was crippled and depressed by unjust and intolerable restrictions, her parliaments corrupted and overawed into the degraded instruments of a distant court, and her nobility and gentry, cut off from all hope of distinction by vindicating the rights, or promoting the interests, of their country at home, were led to look up to the favour of her oppressors as the only remaining avenue to power, and degenerated, for the most part, into a band of mercenary adventurers, the more considerable aspiring to the wretched honour of executing the orders which were dictated from the South, and the rest acquiring gradually those habits of subserviency and selfish submission, the traces of which are by some supposed to be yet discernible in their descendants. The Revolution, which rested almost entirely on the prevailing antipathy to Popery, required, of course, the co-operation of all classes of Protestants; and, by its success, the Scottish Presbyterians were relieved, for a time, from their Episcopalian persecution. But it was not till after the Union that the nation was truly emancipated, or lifted up from the abject condition of a dependant, at once suspected and despised. The effects of that happy consolidation were not indeed *immediately* apparent; for the vices which had been generated by a century of provincial misgovernment, the meannesses that had become habitual, the animosities that had so long been fostered, could not be cured at once by the mere removal of their cause. The generation they had degraded must first be allowed to die out, and more perhaps than one generation; but the poison tree was cut down, the fountain of bitter waters was sealed up, and symptoms of returning vigour and happiness were perceived. Vestiges may still be traced, perhaps, of our long degradation; but for forty years back, the provinces of Scotland have been, on the whole, but the Northern provinces of Great Britain. There are no local oppressions, no national animosities. Life, and liberty, and property, are as secure in Caithness as they are in Middlesex, industry as much encouraged, and wealth still more rapidly progressive, while, not only different religious opinions, but different religious establishments, subsist in the two ends of the same island, in unbroken harmony, and only excite each other by a friendly emulation to greater purity of life, and greater zeal for Christianity. If this happy Union, however, had been delayed for another century; if Scotland had been doomed to submit for a hundred years more to the provincial tyranny of the Lauderdales, Rotheses, and Middletons, and to meet the cruel persecutions which gratified the ferocity of her Dalzells and Drummonds, and tarnished the glories of such men as Montrose and Dundee, with her armed conventicles and covenanted saints militant; to see her patriots exiled, or bleeding on the scaffold; her teachers silenced in her churches and schools, and her courts of justice degraded or overawed into the instruments of a cowardly oppression,—can any man doubt, not only that she would have presented, at this day, a scene of even greater misery and discord than Ireland did in 1800; but that the corruptions and animosities by which she had been

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In the Irish case, England had indeed much, very much, to answer for in not having immediately and strenuously given the fullest possible effect to the Union; in having continued the disabilities of the Catholics, and in still maintaining a Church Establishment useless and hateful to seven-eighths of the Irish people. But, by means of the Union, agriculture was improving in Ireland, and manufactures were advancing every year. Throughout the North, life, liberty, and property, were secure, to a degree never known before. The whole island had begun to be governed by the wisdom and impartial rule of the British government, instead of by turbulent native factions; and now a way was, however late, freely opened into the Imperial legislature. What a benefactor would O'Connell have been to his country, if he had now used patriotically the rights so hardly gained! If he, and the Irish members he had brought into the legislature with him, had used their imperial rights for the thorough realization of the Union, their country might by this time have been, not prosperous and peaceful and satisfied, for her troubles could not be annihilated so speedily, but advancing towards such a condition. He, and he alone, could control the impatient Irish temper; he set himself diligently to exasperate it. He could have won the peasantry to industry and conscientious thrift: he drew them off studiously from their labours to roam the country in attendance on his political agitation. He could have united their wills and voices in a calm and effectual remonstrance against their remaining wrongs, and demand for rights yet due; but he bade them spurn the benefits granted, and taught them to put a foul construction on every act of the government and people of which they were now a part, and trained them to a passionate contempt and hatred of the law, which was all they had to look to for security and social existence. To all this he added that worst and ultimate act of promising to those who would believe him the Repeal, and the speedy Repeal, of the Union; well knowing that that repeal was rendered impossible by the united will and judgment of England, Scotland, and the most enlightened and influential part of Ireland. He promised a federal allegiance to the British sovereign who would not receive such a partial and pernicious allegiance. He promised a parliament in Dublin where parliaments had never been anything but assemblages of jobbers and faction leaders. He promised Irish laws, while corrupting the people out of any capacity for obedience to law at all. He promised the exclusion of British commerce, while without British commerce the Irish could not live. He promised every thing he could not perform, and that no sane and shrewd man (and O'Connell was sane and shrewd) would have performed if he could; and every thing which could most effectually draw off the vast multitudes of the Catholic peasantry of Ireland from the remedy of their social hardships, from the duty to their own households, and their welfare in the State. Whether he gained any objects by threatening and annoying the governments of his day, we may see hereafter. Whether he and his companions in the legislature might not have gained more by honest political endeavours—gained more even in definite achievements, as well as in personal and national character, and in British sympathy for Ireland—there can be no question. Thus early, however, in the summer and autumn of 1830, O'Connell exhibited the programme of his political course. One of the troubles of the Wellington Ministry during this October was the state of Ireland, where the magistrates of Tipperary were obliged to apply for military force, to put down outrage; where one Repeal Association after another was prohibited by the Viceroy, the people believing their liberties assailed in each case; and where O'Connell (on all other occasions the partisan of the Bourbons) bade the people look to the Revolutions of France and Belgium for examples what to do, and counselled a run on the banks throughout Ireland, in order to show government the danger of resisting their demands.

RICK-BURNING.

Nearer home, too, a strange new trouble was arising which it was extremely difficult to cope with. A year or two before this time, English gentry had been holding up hands and eyes at the atrocious barbarism of the peasantry in the north of France, who burned corn ricks in the night. People observed to one another on the awful state of stupidity and malice in which any society must be sunk where such a crime could spread;—a crime so foolish—so suicidal—as well as malicious! What could induce a peasantry to destroy their own food? What a set of idiots they must be!—But, as soon as the dark long nights of October and November came on, the same thing was happening in our agricultural counties, and particularly in Kent. The mystery appears never to have been completely explained. Here and there, perhaps, was seen some skulker—some shabby stranger, wandering about in copses, and behind inclosures, or hiding in sheds, or dropping into the public house, all ear and no tongue, or patting farm-boys and girls on the back, and having confidences with them. Such people were seen here and there; and there were several instances in which young persons on trial for incendiarism accused the principal witness of having enticed them to do the act, and then got the reward by informing against them. But, if these things were true, they do not account for the origin of the practice. There was considerable distress; but not nearly so pressing or threatening as during two or three preceding years. There was—as there always is among an ignorant population—some discontent with machinery; but it did not appear that the farmers who used machinery were more pursued by the incendiary than others. It was probably from all these causes in turn, from some imported knowledge of what had been done in France, and from that never-failing propensity in human nature, by which extraordinary crimes—crimes which produce vast effect by a rapid and easy act, gratifying the relish for power in an untrained mind—spread like a fashion of a season: but, however it was, that autumn was a memorable time to all who lived in the southern agricultural counties of England. The farmers and their families had no comfort in their lives. All day they looked with unavoidable suspicion upon the most ill-conditioned of their neighbours, and on every stranger who came into the parish. All night, they were wakeful; either acting as patrols, or looking out towards the stackyards, or listening for the rumble of the fire engine. Those who were fully insured did not like the idea of fire close to the dwelling-house; and there were some serious doubts about the stability of some of the Insurance Offices, under a pressure for which no prudence could have provided. The farmers who were not insured need not think of it; for no offices would do new business, on any terms that farmers could offer, during the rick-burning period. If a man, weary with patrolling for three or four nights, hoped for a night's sleep, and went, the last thing, to his rickyard, and explored every corner, and visited every shed on his premises, he might find his chamber illuminated by his burning ricks, by the time he could get upstairs. If the patrol, after a similar search, looked round as they shut the gate, some one of them asked what that blue speck in the air was; and before he could be answered, a blue flame would run, rocket-like, along the ridge of a stack, and down its sides, and in one minute the farm-house windows would be glittering, and the sheds would seem to come out into the yellow light, and the pond would be burnished, and all darkness would be suddenly annihilated, except in the shadows cast by the mounting and spreading flames. How it was done was never learned. Some believed that a particular stack in a yard was previously wetted with some liquid that would blaze up with a spark; and so few persons were apprehended in the very act, or under very strong suspicion, that it was a widely spread belief that some kindling substance was directed upon the prepared stack from a distance. Several persons declared, and were more or less believed, that they saw the blue spark traverse the air and descend; and now and then, a long slender wire was said to be found among the ashes. A considerable number of persons saw the fire begin before their very eyes, without being able to discover traces of trespassers. This was naturally a time for malicious or encroaching persons to send threatening letters; and for foolish jesters to play off practical jokes; and for timid persons to take needless alarms; and for all the discontented to make the most of their grievances: and a dreary season of apprehension indeed it was. It is memorable even to those who lived in towns, and conducted no business, and had no enemies, and feared no evil for themselves. It was a great shock to such to find themselves living in a state of society where such things could be. In Kent, there were gibbets erected on Penenden Heath, and bodies swung there in the December winds:—bodies of "boys about eighteen or nineteen years old, but looking much younger;" brothers, who had said to each other on arriving at the spot, and seeing the gallows, "that looks an awful thing." And from Kent, the deadly fashion spread into Hampshire, Wiltshire, Buckinghamshire, Sussex, and Surrey. The military were harassed with fruitless marches, their nightly path lighted by fires from behind, whichever way they turned. Large rewards were offered—£500 for a single conviction; and these rewards were believed to have been now and then obtained by the instigators, while the poor tools were given over to destruction. A special commission was ordered to proceed into the shires where this kind of outrage abounded; and the subject was one of several unwelcome topics in the King's Speech, in November.

Annual Register, 1830, Chron. 201.

Anxieties of Parties.

The opening of this parliament was awaited throughout the country with anxious expectation. In September, when tidings of new continental revolutions were arriving, almost day by day, the funds fell; and what Lord Eldon and the Ministers called "London,"—that is, the aristocracy with whom they had intercourse, and who remained clustered together in the metropolis in a very unusual manner—was in gloomy apprehension of the fall of the monarchy;—not because there were any threatenings of the monarchy, public or private, but because other monarchies were falling. The aristocracy shook their heads over the free and easy sayings and doings of the new sailor-King. "I hear," wrote Lord Eldon, "that the condescensions of the King are beginning to make him unpopular. In that station, such familiarity must produce the destruction of respect. If the people don't continue to think a King somewhat more than a man, they will soon find out that he is not an object of that high respect which is absolutely necessary to the utility of his character." It may be doubted whether any body in England was at that time saying any thing more injurious to monarchy than this. Lord Eldon, however, did what he could towards preserving the monarchy by rebuking the King for improper condescension. The anecdote is an interesting one, as presenting both these old men—so perfectly unlike each other—in a favourable light. Lord Eldon went up with the Bishop of Bristol to present an address. As Lord Eldon was retiring, the King stopped him and said, "My lord, political parties and feelings have run very high, and I am afraid I have made observations upon your lordship which now . . . "—Here Lord Eldon interrupted him, and said, "I entreat your Majesty's pardon—a subject must not hear the language of apology from the lips of his sovereign;" and then the dutiful subject passed out from the presence of his rebuked King. If the Tories were right in supposing the existence of the monarchy to depend in any considerable degree on the personal reserve and dignity of the sovereign, it was assuredly very unsafe under the open-hearted sailor-King.

Life of Lord Eldon; iii. 117

Life of Lord Eldon, iii. 113.

This same "London" believed in October that, in consequence of the removal of Mr. Huskisson, negotiations were going on between the Ministry and "Palmerston and Co.,"—the survivors of the "Canningites;" but, on a footing which yielded far too much to the requisitions of this remnant of a party;—on the footing of pledges for some kind of Parliamentary Reform (which could hardly have been true), some measure about tithes, and some close dealing with the Civil List. Whether these reports had any foundation or not, they are of importance to us now, as showing that the great Tory world of London was prepared for some assertion of the necessity of these measures, and would not have been surprised if they had been brought forward by the Duke himself.—When night closed in on the 1st of November, nobody knew, except those who were seated round the tables of the Ministers, what the disclosures of the Speech were to be next day. For five days, the swearing in of members of parliament had been going on; but the session was not opened till the 2nd of November.

OPENING OF THE SESSION.

When the Speech was promulgated, it was found to be the most offensive that had been uttered by any British monarch since the Revolution. Now, indeed, unless it could presently be shown that the King had been made a tool of by his Ministers, there might soon be some ground for the Tory apprehensions about the unpopularity of the sovereign. Except a surrender of the Civil List to the consideration of parliament, and a recommendation to provide a Regency, in case of his death, there was no topic which gratified the expectation of the people. There was much regret at the disturbed state of Europe; determination to uphold the treaties by which the political system of Europe had been established; indignation, contempt, and horror, about disturbances in England and Ireland; a pledge to use all the powers of law and

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constitution to put down and punish such disturbance; and a lecture on the supreme happiness of those who live under British institutions.—While men were gathering together in streets and public buildings to discuss this Speech, the turbulent in exasperation at its insolence, and the thoughtful in regret at its hardness, the Prime Minister settled every thing—the fate of his government, and the course of public affairs for years to come—by a few sentences in the opening debate which made some people ask whether he had lost his senses, while they revived the Tory party with hopes that some hidden resources of power existed to justify the apparent rashness. In the debate on the Address, the Duke of Wellington uttered that celebrated declaration against Reform in Parliament which immediately overthrew his power at home, and his reputation as a statesman throughout the world. His personal friends have since accounted for the apparent madness of uttering those words at that moment, by saying that it was a mistake owing to his deafness; and this is quoted as his own plea. A deafness had been long growing upon him which had now become considerable; and it was declared on his behalf that if he had heard what had been said by men of his own party, and what was passing on the benches behind him, he would not have made such a declaration in that place and at that time, and without consultation with his colleagues. But the plea goes for nothing in his defence. It does not disprove his ignorance—an ignorance extraordinary and culpable in a member of Administration—of the popular opinion and will: and it proves a most reprehensible carelessness, want of concert with his colleagues, and want of deference for their judgment, on a matter of supreme importance. The memorable sentences were these—uttered with the coolness and confidence with which he would have delivered a lecture on the British Constitution in a Mechanics' Institute:—

Hansard, 3rd Series, i. 8.

THE DUKE'S DECLARATION.

"The noble Earl (Grey) had alluded to the propriety of effecting Parliamentary Reform. . . . He had never heard or read of any measure, up to the present moment, which could in any degree satisfy his mind that the state of the representation could be improved, or be rendered more satisfactory to the country at large than at the present moment. He would not, however, at such an unseasonable time enter upon the subject, or excite discussion, but he should not hesitate to declare unequivocally what were his sentiments upon it. He was fully convinced that the country possessed at the present moment a legislature which answered all the good purposes of legislation, and this to a greater degree than any legislature ever had answered in any country whatever. He would go further, and say, that the legislature and the system of representation possessed the full and entire confidence of the country—deservedly possessed that confidence—and the discussions in the legislature had a very great influence over the opinions of the country. He would go still further, and say, that if at the present moment he had imposed upon him the duty of forming a Legislature for any country, and particularly for a country like this, in possession of great property of various descriptions, he did not mean to assert that he could form such a Legislature as they possessed now, for the nature of man was incapable of reaching such excellence at once; but his great endeavour would be, to form some description of legislature which would produce the same results. The representation of the people at present

Hansard, 3rd Series, i. 52.

contained a large body of the property of the country, and in which the landed interests had a preponderating influence. Under these circumstances, he was not prepared to bring forward any measure of the description alluded to by the noble lord. He was not only not prepared to bring forward any measure of this nature, but he would at once declare that, as far as he was concerned, as long as he held any station in the government of the country, he should always feel it his duty to resist such measures when proposed by others."

On that same night, Mr. Brougham gave notice in the Commons of his intention to bring forward, in a fortnight, the question of Parliamentary Reform. The next day, the unrepresented men of Birmingham were telling each other in the streets that the Prime Minister of the country had declared that the representation could not be improved: and perhaps some traveller, on his way from Marlborough to Salisbury, gazing as he passed on the little mounds of Old Sarum, enclosing its few bare acres, where no living creature dwelt, would think of the two members sitting in the Commons, to represent this patch of ground, and would say to himself, with some amusement, that the Prime Minister of the country had declared that the representation could not be improved. There were thousands of inhabitants of Leeds and Manchester, sustaining hundreds of thousands of labourers—five to one of rural labourers—who conferred ominously on the Minister's satisfaction, at the preponderance of the landed interests in the legislature. While the ferment was spreading and rising in the country, the liberal party in both Houses of Parliament were looking in a spirit of calm and confident expectation upon the struggles and difficulties of the rash and helpless administration. Some members of the Cabinet took pains to intimate the next night after the Duke's declaration, that he spoke for himself alone:—Sir George Murray owned himself in favour of some moderate reform:—Sir Robert Peel would not declare any opinion on a subject as yet wholly indefinite. In the Commons, Mr. Tennyson conjured the country to await in quiet the downfall of the Duke, which was now sure to happen, and by no means to let the Duke's opinion on Reform go for more than any one man's opinion was worth: and in the Lords, the Earl of Winchilsea proposed to lay before the King the opinion of parliament in regard to the incapacity of his Ministers. It was as yet only the 4th of November: but this was a season when hours told for days. In forty-eight hours the Duke was in the embarrassment of another scrape, in which there was so much of the ludicrous mixed up with what might have been very serious, that the subject was ever a most exasperating one to the great soldier.

Hansard, i. 168.

Hansard, i. 175.

Hansard, i. 198.

In justice to him, it must be remembered how his mind had been wrought upon for some months past, in sympathy with his friend Polignac, in apprehension for that distribution of power in Europe which he had been concerned in establishing; and by the daily increasing disturbances in our rural districts which exactly resembled those that preceded the revolution in France. It must be remembered how little he really knew the people of England; and how, to a mind like his, the mere name of revolution suggests images of regicide, and of every thing horrible;—images which were, no doubt, in his mind when he turned away as he was seen to do from the spectacle of the tricolour floating in the Thames. These things mark him as unfit to be the Prime Minister of England in 1830; but they soften the shame of the thought that

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Alderman Key's Panic.

the high courage of the great soldier sank under a senseless alarm given by an alderman of London. This Alderman Key had been elected to serve the office of Lord Mayor for the coming year; and the King and Queen and the Ministers were to dine with him at Guildhall on the 9th of November. On the 6th, the alderman addressed a letter to the Prime Minister, the tone and wording of which should have shown to any man of sense that it was not a communication to be acted upon without large confirmation of its statements. This letter warned the Duke that a certain number of "desperate characters" intended to make an attack upon him near the Hall; and it plainly desired that, as the civil force would not be enough for the Duke's protection, he would not come without a strong military guard. The next night, Saturday, Sir Robert Peel sent a letter to the Lord Mayor to state that their Majesties declined visiting the city on the 9th. The Ministers pleaded that they had received other letters, besides that from Alderman Key: and, but for this, the case would have been much simplified; for the poor man expressed, again and again, the deepest contrition for his folly in writing as he had done, when he saw how serious were the consequences of the act.—In the course of Sunday, a deputation from the committee of the feast waited three times on the Ministers; and the Duke's declaration was that either the banquet must be postponed, or a large military force must be put in possession of the city. The banquet was postponed.

Hansard, i. 251.

Annual Register, 1830, Chron. 187.

In the morning, the consternation in the city was extreme. No one knew what was the matter; but that there must be something terrible, there could be no doubt. Some said that there was to be a 5th of November on the 9th: some, that while their Majesties were dining, the gaspipes were to be cut, Temple Bar blockaded, the royal personages made prisoners, and London sacked. There was no nonsense that could not find belief on that fearful Monday, though every body agreed that no sovereign had ever been more popular than William IV., who had not done an ungracious thing, nor spoken an ungracious word, except that Speech, a few days before, which everybody knew to be solely the work of his Ministers. On that Monday morning, Consols fell three per cent. in an hour and a half: careful citizens renewed the bolts and bars of their doors, lined their shutters with iron plates, and laid in arms and ammunition, in expectation of the sacking of London. Before the end of the week, the most alarmed were laughing at the panic: but not only was the mysterious panic a fearful thing at the moment, but the natural effects were very vexatious. There was a good deal of desultory and unmeaning rioting, by such disorderly citizens as thought that if they had the discredit, they might as well have the fun. And, worse than this, an unfounded impression went abroad through all the world, that it was not safe for the King of England to pass through the streets of his own capital, to dine with its Chief Magistrate.

Change of Ministry.

Day by day now, it became only a question of weeks about when the Administration would go out;—whether before the Christmas recess or after. Before a single week from the panic, they were out. On the 15th, Sir Henry Parnell made his promised motion for a Select Committee to examine the accounts connected with the Civil List. The debate was not long, the Ministers declaring that simplification and retrenchment had been carried as far as was possible; and the Opposition desiring to have it proved whether the

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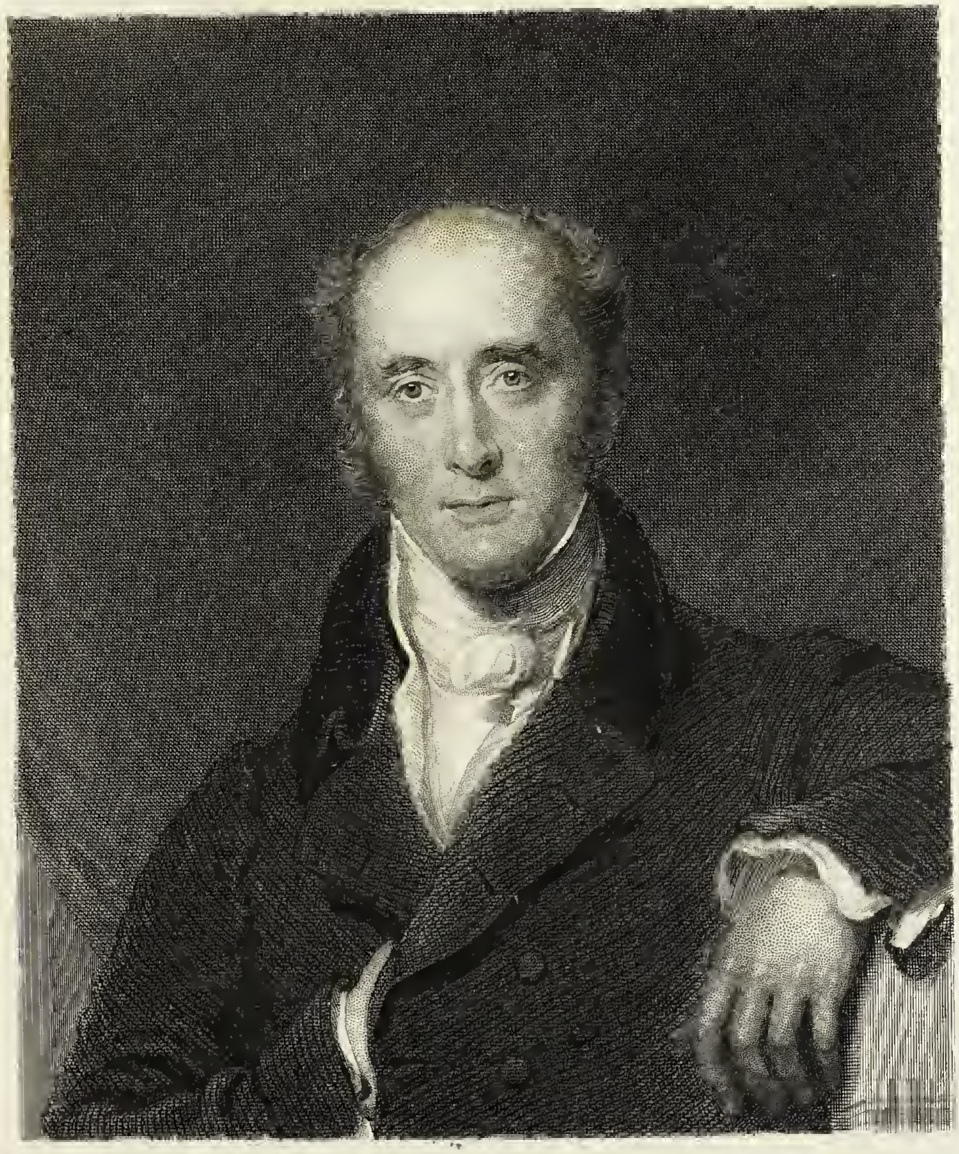
matter was so. On the division, the government were left in a minority of twenty-nine, in a House of 437 members. Mr. Hobhouse asked Sir Robert Peel whether the Ministers would retain their seats after such a division; but he received no answer. He was about to press the question, when Mr. Brougham proposed to wait till the next day for the answer and the appointment of the Committee just decided upon. The Committee, however, was appointed at once:—the reply was waited for. The Ministers afterwards declared that they might not have considered this division on the Civil List reason enough for their resignation, by itself; but that they considered with it the probable result of Mr. Brougham's motion for Parliamentary Reform, which was to be debated on the night after the Civil List question. Hansard, i. 518.

On that evening, the 16th, the Duke of Wellington came down to announce to the Lords that his resignation of office had been presented and accepted, and that he continued in his position only till his successor should have been appointed. In the other House, Sir Robert Peel made the same declaration on behalf of himself and all the other members of the administration. Hansard, i. 558.

Lord Althorp immediately requested Mr. Brougham to defer his motion on Parliamentary Reform, which was too important to be debated while the government of the country was in an unsettled state. Mr. Brougham expressed great reluctance, and threw the responsibility upon the House of delaying the matter till the 25th, declaring that he would then bring it forward, whatever might be the condition of circumstances, and whoever might be his Majesty's Ministers.—No one had any doubt about who, in the main, would be his Majesty's Ministers. It was well understood that the great day was at hand when the British polity was to renew its youth and replenish its life. Some who walked homewards from their parliamentary halls to their own firesides, through the darkness of that November night, told each other that a brighter sun than that of Midsummer was to arise to-morrow, encumbered and dimmed at first, probably, by clouds and vapours, but destined to send down its vital warmth and light through long vistas of remote generations. Hansard, i. 563.



EARL GREY.

After the Picture by Sir Thomas Lawrence.

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In this year One of the People's Cause, the people were ready; and they were blessed with rulers who were willing to make a beginning so large and decided as to secure the permanence of the work, as far as they carried it, and its certain prosecution through future generations. It is nothing that they did not foresee this further prosecution, nor believe it when it was foretold to them. Great deeds naturally so fill the conceptions and sympathies of the doers that they are—except a great philosopher here and there—Finality-men: but those who are not so immediately engaged see further, and remember that sound political institutions are made perfect very slowly, and by a succession of improvements. There were many, therefore, who in that day of exultation saw more cause for rejoicing than did those who were proudest of the immediate triumph. They saw in the Parliamentary Reform of Lord Grey a noble beginning of a great work which it might take centuries to perfect, and in every stage of which the national mind would renew its strength, and gain fresh virtue and wisdom. They appreciated the greatness of the first effort, by which the impediments to true representation were to be removed, and some steps taken towards a recognition of the vast commercial interests which had risen up in modern times: but they saw that the due equalization of the landed and commercial interests, and the true proportion of the representation of property and numbers could not be attained at a stroke, and that much of the noble work of Parliamentary Reform must remain to occupy and exalt future generations. The wisest and the most eager, however, the oldest and the youngest, desired nothing more than what they now saw—their nation, as a whole, demanding and achieving its own self-improvement, instead of ringing bells and firing cannon about bloody victories obtained in the cause of foreign governments.

It was news enough for one day that this great era was opening, and that Lord Grey stood on the threshold. By the next day, the people were eager to know who were to be his helpers. The newspapers could not give the list of the Ministry fast enough. In reading rooms, and at the corners of streets, merchants, bankers, and tradesmen, took down the names, and carried them to their families, reading them to every one they met by the way; while poor men who could not write, carried them well enough in their heads; for most of the leading names were of men known to such of the labouring class as understood their own interest in the great cause just coming on.

Next on the list to Lord Grey was Lord Althorp, as Chancellor of the Exchequer. He was known as an advocate of the Ballot; as having been forward in questions of retrenchment and reform; and as being a man, if of no eminent vigour, of great benevolence, and an enthusiastic love of justice. His abilities as a statesman were now to be tried. Mr. Brougham's name came next. He was to be Lord Chancellor. It was amusing to see how that announcement was every where received with a laugh: in most cases, with a laugh which he would not have objected to—a laugh of mingled surprise, exultation, and amusement. The anti-reformers laughed scornfully—dwelling upon certain declarations of his against taking office, and upon his incompetency as an equity lawyer; facts which he would not himself have disputed, but which his party thought should be put aside by the pressure of the time. To his worshippers there was something comic in the thought of his vitality

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fixed down upon the Woolsack under the compression of the Chancellor's wig. Some expected a world of amusement in seeing how he got on in a position so new; how the wild and mercurial Harry Brougham would comport himself among the peers, and as the Head of the Law. Some expected from him the realization of all that he had declared ought to be done by men in power: and as the first and most certain boon, a scheme of National Education which he would carry with all the power of his office and his pledged political character. Others sighed while they smiled; sighed to give up the popular member for Yorkshire, and feared that his country had had the best of him. Lord Lansdowne, the President of the Council, was held in a quiet general respect. Lord Durham, the John George Lambton who had ever fought the people's battle well, was hailed with great warmth. He was Lord Privy Seal. There were some "Canningites," who were received with good will without much expectation. Charles Grant, President of the Board of Control; Lord Palmerston, Foreign Secretary; Lord Melbourne, Home Secretary; and Lord Goderich, as Colonial Secretary. The only anti-Catholic and anti-reform member of the cabinet was the Duke of Richmond, who was Postmaster-General. How he found himself there was a subject of speculation on all hands. The other members of the Cabinet were Sir James Graham, at the Admiralty; Lord Auckland, at the Mint and Board of Trade; and Lords Holland and Carlisle. Out of the Cabinet, there were the names, among others, of Lord John Russell, pledged to Parliamentary Reform; Mr. Charles Poulett Thomson, pledged to Repeal of the Corn-laws; and Sir Thomas Denman and Sir William Horne as Attorney and Solicitor General. Lord Anglesey was again Viceroy of Ireland, and Lord Plunket the Irish Lord Chancellor. The Chief Secretary for Ireland was Mr. Stanley. Such was the government about to conduct the great organic change in the British Constitution which the anti-reformers were still resolved should never take place.

There was a suspension of business in Parliament while the re-election of some of the ministers went on. One defeat was ludicrous enough. Mr. Stanley, the heir of the house of Derby, was thrown out at Preston by Henry Hunt, who was not yet, it thus appears, seen through by all his followers as by Bamford.

Regency Bill.

The first business to be proceeded with was the Regency Bill, which had already been delayed too long. By this Bill it was provided, that in case of the birth of a posthumous child of the King's, the Queen should be Regent during the minority. In the other case, the Duchess of Kent was to be Regent, if the Princess Victoria should come to the throne during her minority, unless, indeed, the Duchess should marry a foreigner.

Annual Register, 1830, p. 165.

Hansard, i. 676.

Lord Wynford proposed a grant of additional powers to the magistracy in the disturbed districts, where matters were going on from bad to worse; but the ministers declared that the existing powers of the law were sufficient, if duly put in force; but they did not conceal their opinion that a more active and sensible set of men might be brought into the commission of the peace. How serious was the aspect of the times we find by the gazetting of an Order in Council that the Archbishop of Canterbury should prepare a prayer for relief from social disturbance; which prayer was to be read in all the episcopal churches and chapels of England and Scotland.

Annual Register, Chron. 209.

Official Salaries.

Hansard, i. 932.

In the Commons a select committee was appointed, on the motion of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, to inquire what reductions could be made in the salaries and emoluments of offices held by members of either House of Parliament, during the pleasure of the Crown. This was a graceful beginning of the business of retrenchment by the ministers—this offer to reduce, in the first place, their own salaries. As the new administration had much to do in preparing during the recess the great measures to which they were pledged, they moved for a long interval, and parliament was adjourned to the 3rd of February, 1831.

State of Ireland.

Annual Register, 1830, Chron. 208—213.

At the close of this year One of the People's Cause, there was as much disturbance in Ireland as if the government in London had been composed of the rankest anti-Catholics. O'Connell set himself up against Lord Anglesey; organized insults to him on his arrival; encouraged tumultuous processions and meetings, by which he was himself to be thanked for his advocacy of Repeal of the Union; and put out addresses, in defiance and reply to the proclamations of the Viceroy, the whole tenour of which was to rouse the strong passions of the Irish artisans and peasants against the government, the law, and the imperial connexion, from which, at this juncture, so many benefits might be expected. His interspersed exhortations were to observe the law; his influence went to excite that fever of the mind which is sure to throw off law, sooner or later: and thus inauspiciously began the new reign of the popular Viceroy, Lord Anglesey.

The Cholera.

Annual Register, 1830, Chron. 160.

By this time the dread of something more awful than Irish disturbance and Kentish rick-burning, was stealing into the heart of the nation. All reports of the Asiatic Cholera which Englishmen had listened to, had been to their ears and imaginations like the accounts which have come down to us of the desolating plagues of the middle ages—something horrible to conceive of, but nothing to be afraid of, as if it could ever reach us. But now it was known—known by orders of the Privy Council—that the plague had spread from Asia into Europe, and was travelling north-westwards, exactly in the direction of our islands. All that was at present proposed was an attention to the Quarantine laws; but the imagination of the people naturally went further than the letters of the Privy Council. If George IV. and the Wellington Ministry had lived through the year, its close would have been a season of almost unequalled gloom. But the nation now had an honest-hearted and unselfish King, a popular ministry, and a prospect of immeasurable political benefits. So that it was in a mood, on the whole, of hope and joy that they saw the expiration of the Year One of the People's Cause.

CHAPTER III.

1831.

THE year 1831 opened gloomily. Those who believed that revolution was at hand, feared to wish one another a happy new year; and the anxiety about revolution was by no means confined to anti-reformers. Society was already in a discontented and tumultuous state; its most ignorant portion being acted upon at once by hardship at home and example from abroad; and there was every reason to expect a deadly struggle before Parliamentary Reform could be carried. The ignorant and misled among the peasantry and artisans looked upon the French and other revolutions as showing that men had only to take affairs into their own hands, in order to obtain whatever they wanted; and, in their small way, they took matters into their own hands. Machine-breaking went on to such an extent, that men were tried for the offence in groups of twelve or twenty at a time; and the January nights were lighted up by burning barns and ricks, as the preceding months had been. On the 3rd of January, a Manchester manufacturer was murdered in a manner which gave a shock to the whole kingdom. He left his father's house to go to the mill, in the evening, when it was dark; he was brought home dead within ten minutes, shot through the heart in the lane, by one of three men who were lying in wait for him. The significance of the case lay in the circumstance that it was a murder from revenge, occasioned by a quarrel about the Trade Union. There was fear lest the practice should spread; lest every manufacturer who refused to employ men belonging to a Trade Union (and there were many such) should be liable to be picked off by an assassin, appointed by lot to be the instrument of the vengeance of his Union. A reward of 1000*l*. for the detection of the murderer was offered by the Secretary of State, and another 1000*l*. by the father and family of the victim; but no clue was obtained at the time, nor for some years afterwards.

Popular Discontents.

Annual Register, 1831, Chron. 8.

Prospect of Conflict.

As for the dangers which might follow upon the action of government on the great question, the coolest heads had the strongest sense of them. The apprehensions of the anti-reformers were all about the consequences of the Reform Bill, if carried. The apprehensions of the most thoughtful reformers were of the perils attending its passage. On a superficial view it might appear that the result was so certain that the way could not be much embarrassed; but there was not only the anti-reforming aristocracy to be encountered on the one hand, but large masses of malcontents on the other. In the estimate of the anti-reform forces might be included—possibly, under certain circumstances—the sovereign; certainly, the House of Peers;—almost a whole House of Peers, made desperate, not only by fear of loss of political power, but by spoliation of what they considered their lawful, and a wholly inestimable property: next, the aristocracy in the House of Commons and out of it who had influence and property of the same kind at stake: and lastly, the

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whole body of Toryism in England; a party never small, and at this time made particularly active and desperate by a sincere belief that the Constitution was likely to be overthrown, and that the English nation would presently be living under mob-rule. Large numbers of this party, who had not the remotest interest in borough property, were as fierce against the Reform measure as the peers themselves, from this tremendous fear. There was quite as much folly among the lowest classes on the other side. The hungry and the desperately ignorant, who are always eager for change because they may gain and cannot lose, believed that Parliamentary Reform would feed and clothe them, and bring work and good wages, and a removal of all the taxes. It was too probable that a protracted opposition would raise these poor people in riot, and turn the necessary revolution, from being a peaceable one, into an overthrow of law and order. It is necessary to take note of this state of things, in order to understand and appreciate the action of the middle classes during the two following years.

While the Ministers were hard at work, preparing their mighty measure, the middle classes were preparing for their support. The action of the non-electors during this month of January was as powerful a satire on the then existing system of representation as could have been displayed. The vast populations of Leeds, Birmingham, and Manchester, and countless hosts of intelligent and enlightened tradesmen and artisans elsewhere, sent shoals of petitions to parliament for a Reform of the House of Commons: and they did something more effectual by forming Political Unions, or preparing for their immediate formation, in case of need. This was the force which kept the peace, and preserved us from disastrous revolution. These people knew what they were about; and they went calmly to their work. Of course, the anti-reformers complained of compulsion—of extorted consent—of unconstitutional forces being put in action. This was true; since they themselves compelled the compulsion, and called out the unconstitutional forces. There was no question about the fact, but only about the justification of it. No one denies that occasions may and do occur when the assertion of a nation's will against either a corrupt government or a tyrannical party is virtuous, and absolutely required by patriotic duty. The fearful and trying question is, when this ought to be done, and how men are to recognise the true occasion when it comes. There probably never was an occasion when the duty was more clear than now. The sovereign and his ministers were on the side of the people: and if the opposing party should prove disloyal to sovereign and people, for the sake of their own political power and mercenary interests; if they held out till the one party or the other must yield, it was for the interest of peace, law, order, loyalty, and the permanence of the Constitution, that the class most concerned—the orderly middle class, who had the strongest conceivable stake in the preservation of law and peace—should overstep the bounds of custom, and occupy a debateable land of legality, in support of the majority of the government and the nation. They felt that they occupied the strong central position whereby they upheld the patriotic government above them; and repressed the eager, untaught, and impoverished multitude below them; and they saw that whatever might best secure the completion of the act which must now be carried through, they must do. They therefore prepared them-

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selves for all consequences of their determination that Parliamentary Reform should take place. Some formed themselves into Political Unions; some held themselves ready to do so, if need should arise: all made a more rapid progress in political knowledge and thought than they could perhaps have antecedently supposed possible in the time; when the period of struggle arrived, they did their duty magnificently; and their conduct stands for ever before the world, a model of critical political action, and a ground of confidence in the political welfare of England in all future times.

Ministerial Declaration.

Hansard, ii. 118.

When the Houses re-assembled, on the 3rd of February, Lord Grey made the expected declaration that a measure of Parliamentary Reform was in readiness to be brought forward in the other House. He intimated that the work had been laborious, and, in its first stages, difficult; but that it had been the desire of the Ministers to prepare a scheme "which should be effective, without exceeding the bounds of a just and well-advised moderation;" and that they had succeeded to their wish, the whole Government being unanimous in their adoption of the measure as an exponent of their principle and aim. When Lord John Russell afterwards brought the measure forward, he declared the whole scheme to be Lord Grey's; and there was assuredly no mind in England which had more earnestly, or for more years, meditated the subject. The execution was universally understood to have been confided in chief to Lord Durham; and there was assuredly no heart more in the work, or more true to the principles of popular freedom. The profoundest secrecy was observed as to the scope and details of the measure, to the very last moment. It was of great consequence that it should be so, in order that the eager friends and foes of the measure should not rush into conflict on any misunderstanding or fragmentary knowledge. The very few persons who were necessarily admitted to the confidence of the government felt this confidence to be a heavy burden. One, deeply engaged, and hard-worked, said afterwards that he was almost afraid to sleep, lest he should dream and speak of what his mind was full of. The great day of disclosure was the 1st of March, when Lord John Russell had the honour—though not a cabinet minister, but on account of his long advocacy of the cause—of bringing forward the measure in the Commons. On that day, the friends of the Ministry had dinner-parties, where the guests sat watching the clock, and waiting for tidings. The Lord Chancellor had promised the hostess of one of these parties that no one should be earlier served with the news than she; and anxiously she sat, at the head of her table, till the packet was brought in which the Lord Chancellor had despatched, the moment he found that Lord John Russell had begun his speech. As she read aloud, exclamations of surprise at the scope of the scheme burst forth. And so it was, all over the kingdom. During the recess, some of the liberal papers had conjured the people to receive thankfully whatever measure the Ministers might offer, and be assured that, however inadequate, they could not have more. Other papers had been more true to their duty, exhorting the people to take nothing less than the whole of what they demanded. If they understood their principle, and were earnest in their demand, they ought not to yield an inch of their ground. It now appeared that there was no faltering on the part of the Ministers; no desire that the people should surrender an inch of their ground. They knew that there could be no half-and-half dealing with boroughmongery. It was a vice which must

Bill brought forward.

be extinguished, and not an indulgence which might be gradually weakened. By this Bill, the practice of boroughmongery was cut up by the roots. This was the essential feature of the measure. Whether the further reforms advocated were complete or inadequate, this opened the way to all else. "Like Sinbad," as was said at the time, "we have first to dash from our shoulders the 'Old Man of the Sea,' and afterwards to complete our deliverance." Seven Administrations, ii. 84. It will afterwards appear how partial was the representation proposed to be given, and how inadequate and faulty were the constructive arrangements. But there were not two opinions at the time as to the Ministers having gone further than anybody expected, and proposed a measure which could never be withdrawn without a deadly struggle, nor stand without becoming a dividing line between the old History of England and the new.

It was a great night—that night of the 1st of March, 1831—when for the first time a response was heard from within the vitiated House to the voice of intelligence without. This House had long been the property or the tool of powers and parties adverse to the general weal. While the world without had been growing wiser and more enlightened in political principle, this assembly had made no progress, or had deteriorated, till the voice of general intelligence had given it unmistakeable warning that it must either reform itself or succumb. The last and effectual warning was the demand of an administration which should invite the House of Commons to reform itself: and here, at least, on this memorable night, was the response—the answering hail—for which the stretched ear of the vigilant nation was listening, to the furthest boundary of the empire. While the occasion appeared thus serious to those who brought it about, there were listeners, and not a few, in the House that night who could not receive Lord John Russell's exposition otherwise than as an audacious jest. Life of Lord Eldon, iii. 123. Others came away at the end, and said they could give no clear account of it; and that there was no need, as Ministers could have no other intention than to render office untenable for those who must presently succeed them. Thus blind were the anti-reformers, after all the long and threatening warnings they had received. But a few hours opened their eyes. The morning newspapers exhibited the scheme, with all its royal and ministerial sanctions: and that which appeared a jest the night before was now pronounced a revolution.

The proper occasion for giving a specific account of the Reform Act will be when its provisions were finally settled. It may suffice now to say that, in the words of Lord Grey, "Representation, not Nomination, is the principle of the Reform Bill:" that, in pursuance of this principle, sixty "rotten boroughs" were deprived of the franchise; and 168 borough seats were abolished. A few small boroughs were retained—to the dissatisfaction of reformers generally—for the purpose of admitting an order of members not likely to be returned for large towns or counties, and providing for some little representation of the small-borough class of citizens. The reformers were also sorry that fifty-four members were given to counties which had hitherto been opposed to popular interests; and the stopping short at the representation of the middle classes was disapproved by a multitude in the middle and upper classes, as much as by the excluded artisans themselves. Wise statesmen and observers know well that the strongest Conservative power of a country like ours resides in the holders of the smallest properties. However much the nobleman may be attached to his broad lands, and his mansions and parks, and the middle-class manufacturer or professional man to the station and provision he has secured for his family, this attachment is weak, this stake is small, in comparison with those of the artisan who tastes the first sweets of property in their full relish. He is the man to contend to the last gasp for the institutions of his country, and for the law and order which secure to him what he values so dearly. The commonest complaint of all made by the restless and discontented spirits of any time is that their former comrades become "spoiled" from the moment they rise into the possession of any ease, property, or social advantage; and they do truly thus become "spoiled" for any revolutionary or disorderly purpose. By all to whom this fact was clear it was thought a mistake to have stopped at the proposed point in the communication of the franchise: but they knew that it was an error which might and would be corrected in a future time, and were content to wait. They saw how the clumsy ancient methods of conducting political affairs, in the rough, as it were, at the bidding of a few individual wills, were giving way to the more comprehensive, refined, and precise methods of government by representation; and that, when this new philosophical practice had gone somewhat further, the value of the artisan class, as the nicest of political barometers, would be practically acknowledged. To them, to their union of popular intelligence and strong love of property, would rulers and all propertied classes hereafter look for the first warnings of approaching disturbance, the earliest breathings of Conservative caution: and to representatives of this class will a welcome assuredly be given in the councils of the nation, as our political procedure improves in elevation and refinement. The reduction of the number of members of the Commons was not at first objected to on any hand. As Lord John Russell observed, "it is to be considered that when this parliament is reformed, there will not be so many members who enter parliament merely for the sake of the name, and as a matter of style and fashion:" not so many, he went on to say, who were travelling abroad during the whole session, or who regarded the House as a pleasant lounge, and not an arduous field of duty. The 168 displaced members were not therefore to be succeeded by an equal number. There was to be a decrease of sixty-two, making the total number of representatives 596. The parishes and suburbs of London were to send eight new members, and the large towns in the provinces thirty-four; all these together not equalling the new county representation.

Hansard, ii. 1071.

Reception of the Bill.

On the whole, it was concluded by the Reform party that the measure should be received as most meritorious and sufficiently satisfactory, on account of its bold dealing with corruption;—of its making a complete clearance for further action: but that it was not a measure of radical reform. As a contemporary observed, "The ground, limited as it is, which it is proposed to clear and open to the popular influence, will suffice as the spot desired by Archimedes for the plant of the power that must ultimately govern the whole system."

Seven Administrations, ii. 84.

It was thus that the authors of the measure expected it to be received by the Reform party. In the course of the debates on the Bill in the House of Peers, Lord Sidmouth, who supposed Lord Grey to have been carried by circumstances far beyond his original intentions, said to him, "I hope God will forgive you on account of this Bill: I don't think I can." To which Lord Grey replied, "Mark my words: within two years you will find that we have

Life of Lord Sidmouth, iii. 439.

become unpopular, for having brought forward the most aristocratic measure that ever was proposed in parliament." Lord Althorp did not conceal his opinion—he avowed it—that the Reform Bill was the most aristocratic Act ever offered to the nation: and the wonder is who could doubt it while the new county representation preponderated over the addition to the towns. The inestimable virtue of the bill—that which made it the horror of the "borough-market" men, as the Marquess of Blandford called them, was the destruction of borough property by the substitution of election for nomination.

As for the reception of the measure by its enemies—we have seen that when Lord John Russell opened the business, it was supposed to be a jest, or a factious manœuvre. The staid Hansard, usually so strictly adhering to bare reporting, here gives us a passing glimpse of the aspect of the House when Lord John Russell read the list of boroughs proposed for disfranchisement. In the course of his reading "he was frequently interrupted by shouts of laughter, cries of 'hear, hear!' from members for these boroughs, and various interlocutions across the table." And what was it that they were about to lose? There was a man living, speaking and preaching in those days, who could convey more wisdom in a jest, more pathos in a burlesque sketch, than other men could impress through more ordinary forms; and he has left a picture of the "borough-market" which, as the last and unsurpassed, ought to be put on permanent record:—"So far from its being a merely theoretical improvement, I put it to any man, who is himself embarked in a profession, or has sons in the same situation, if the unfair influence of boroughmongers has not perpetually thwarted him in his lawful career of ambition, and professional emolument? 'I have been in three general engagements at sea,' said an old sailor—'I have been twice wounded;—I commanded the boats when the French frigate, the Astrolabe, was cut out so gallantly.' 'Then you are made a post-captain?' 'No: I was very near it; but Lieutenant Thompson cut me out, as I cut out the French frigate: his father is town-clerk of the borough for which Lord F—— is member; and there my chance was finished.' In the same manner, all over England, you will find great scholars rotting on curacies—brave captains starving in garrets—profound lawyers decayed and mouldering in the Inns of Court, because the parsons, warriors, and advocates of boroughmongers must be crammed to saturation, before there is a morsel of bread for the man who does not sell his votes, and put his country up to auction: and though this is of every-day occurrence, the borough system, we are told, is no practical evil." . . . . "But the thing I cannot, and will not bear, is this:—what right has this Lord, or that Marquess, to buy ten seats in parliament, in the shape of boroughs, and then to make laws to govern me? And how are these masses of power redistributed? The eldest son of my Lord is just come from Eton—he knows a good deal about Æneas and Dido, Apollo and Daphne—and that is all: and to this boy his father gives a six-hundredth part of the power of making laws, as he would give him a horse, or a double-barrelled gun. Then Vellum, the steward, is put in—an admirable man;—he has raised the estates—watched the progress of the family Road and Canal Bills—and Vellum shall help to rule over the people of Israel. A neighbouring country gentleman, Mr. Plumpkin, hunts with my Lord—opens him a gate or two, while the hounds are running—dines with my Lord—agrees with my Lord—

Hansard, ii. 1077.

Sydney Smith's Works, iii. 126.

1831. wishes he could rival the Southdown sheep of my Lord—and upon Plumpkin is conferred a portion of the government. Then there is a distant relation of the same name, in the County Militia, with white teeth, who calls up the carriage at the Opera, and is always wishing O'Connell was hanged, drawn, and quartered—then a barrister, who has written an article in the Quarterly, and is very likely to speak, and refute M'Culloch; and these five people, in whose nomination I have no more agency than I have in the nomination of the toll-keepers of the Bosphorus, are to make laws for me and my family—to put their hands in my purse, and to sway the future destinies of this country; and when the neighbours step in, and beg permission to say a few words before these persons are chosen, there is an universal cry of ruin, confusion, and destruction;—we have become a great people under Vellum and Plumpkin—under Vellum and Plumpkin our ships have covered the ocean—under Vellum and Plumpkin our armies have secured the strength of the Hills—to turn out Vellum and Plumpkin is not Reform but Revolution."

In recognising the truth of this picture, and declaring that such a state of things could not have endured much longer, we must remember the cost of the breaking up to those who nobly volunteered to do it. The framers of the Reform Bill were noblemen and gentlemen of high family, who were laying down hereditary possessions of their own while requiring the same sacrifice from others. The borough-wealth of the Russell family was known to be enormous; yet the Duke of Bedford cheered on Lord John Russell in his task. If we read with tender admiration of loyal noblemen and gentry who brought their wealth to the feet of an unprosperous sovereign, and made themselves landless for the sake of their King, what must we feel at this great new spectacle of the privileged classes divesting themselves of privilege for the sake of the people—for the honour and integrity of the country? It was a great deed: and posterity will ever declare it so.—It is objected by some that these peers and gentlemen were well aware, and indeed openly avowed, that they could not retain this kind of wealth, nor, perhaps, any other, if Reform of Parliament were not granted: they apprehended a convulsion, and said so; declaring also that this was the reason why their reforms were made so prompt and sweeping. This is quite true: but it is precisely this which shows how superior these men were to the selfish greed which blinded the eyes of their opponents. They had open minds, clear eyes, calm consciences, and hands at the service of their country; and they therefore saw things in their true light, and turned the pressure of an irresistible necessity into a noble occasion of self-sacrifice, and disinterested care for the public weal; while the opposite order of borough-holders saw nothing, believed nothing, knew nothing, and declared nothing, but that they would not part with their hereditary property and influence. When they protested that to take away their borough property was "to destroy the aristocracy," they passed a severer satire upon their order than could have been invented by any enemy. If the aristocracy of England could not subsist but upon a rotten-borough foundation, it was indeed a different order from that which the world had, for many centuries, supposed: but no one could look upon the dignified head of the Prime Minister, or the countenances of his self-sacrificing comrades in the House of Peers, without feeling that the world was right, and that those who said any thing so derogatory to

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the aristocratic tenure in England were basely and sordidly wrong. Lord Eldon was one of these; and in his speech at the Pitt Club, supposing that point granted, he went on to his view of the consequences; in the course of which we find him, who ought to have known better, falling into the vulgar error of the aristocracy of supposing only one class of society to exist below that wealthy one with which they are compelled by their affairs to have business. Lord Eldon, like others who must know better, included under one head—"the lower classes"—every body below the wealthiest bankers—manufacturers, tradesmen, artisans, labourers, and paupers; as we now and then hear fine people confusing the claims of great capitalists and humble cottagers, announcements in Town Hall meetings and gossip in servants' halls. Lord Eldon must have known, but he seems to have forgotten, that there is a large proportion of society, composed of the ignorant and hopeless classes, lying below the rank from which he rose; yet this is the representation he gives of the happy state of the English people which was to be broken up by the Reform Bill, through its destruction of the aristocracy. "The aristocracy once destroyed," he declared to his brother Pittites, "the best supporters of the lower classes would be swept away. In using the term 'lower classes' he meant nothing offensive. How could he do so? He himself had been one of the lower classes. He gloried in the fact; and it was noble and delightful to know that the humblest in the realm might, by a life of industry, propriety, and good moral and religious conduct, rise to eminence. All could not become eminent in public life—that was impossible;—but every man might arrive at honour, independence, and competence."

What?—every man?—he whose early years are spent in opening and shutting a door in a coal pit; who does not know his own name, and never heard of God?—or any one of thousands of hand-loom weavers, who swallow opium on Saturday nights, to deaden the pains of hunger on Sundays?—or the Dorsetshire labourer, whose only prospect is that his eight shillings a week may be reduced to seven, and the seven to six, but never that his wages may rise? May "every man" of these arrive at honour, independence, and competence? Truly, Lord Eldon did his best to prove how sorely these "lower classes" needed some kind of representation in parliament, or at least the admission of some who might make known their existence and their claims.

Debate.

The debate which followed the introduction of the Reform Bill extended over seven nights, between seventy and eighty members delivering their views in the course of that time. The adversaries of the measure argued on grounds more contradictory than are often exhibited, even on great occasions like the present. Some cried out that democracy was henceforth in the ascendant, while others were full of indignation that the qualification was raised, and so many poor freemen disfranchised. Some complained of the qualification as too low, and others as too high. Some insinuated pity for the sovereign, as overborne by factious Ministers; others were disgusted at the parade of the King's sanction, and intimated that it was nothing to them what the King thought. Of all the objections uttered, none rose higher in matter or tone than a deprecation of change in a country which had been so great under the old laws; and a remonstrance against lessening the proportionate power of the House of Lords.

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On the side of the measure, there was a brief statement of objections on the score of deficiency; but an agreement to work cordially for the Bill as it was offered, in the hope of supplying its deficiencies afterwards. Many would have desired an extension of the franchise downwards, as well as upwards and laterally, as was now provided by the removal of many restrictions. Yet more had hoped for the Ballot, to purify the elections, and for a shortening of the duration of parliaments. But all agreed to relinquish their minor objects for the time, to secure the overthrow of borough-corruption: and the great cry was agreed upon which from that hour rang through the land for above a year—"The Bill—the whole Bill—and nothing but the Bill."

There was to be no division on the first reading. Neither party seemed disposed to bring the matter to any test so soon: the Ministers apprehending being left in a minority, and their opponents not being yet combined for an organized resistance. The Bill was read a first time on the 14th of March.

First Reading.

And now began the great stir among the middle classes which kept the country for nearly two years in a state which was called revolutionary, and with justice; but which showed with how little disturbance of the public peace that prodigious growth of political sentiment can take place which is the resulting benefit of a principled revolution. At each stage of the business there was some disorder, and much noble manifestation of intelligence and will. Illuminations were called for foolishly, at times, and windows broken—especially at Edinburgh, in the course of this spring. Lists of placemen and pensioners, containing incorrect items and invidious statements, were handed about at a season when it was dangerous to inflame the popular mind against an aristocracy already too much vituperated. Many of the newspapers were not only violent on their own side, but overbore all rights of opinion on the other as insufferably as the rankest of the Tory journals: and, naturally enough, a multitude of the ignorant believed that all the taxes would be taken off, and that every man would have the independence and competence that Lord Eldon talked about, if the Reform Bill passed, and regarded accordingly those who stood between them and the Bill. These were the sins and follies of the time: and it is marvellous that they were no worse.

Some will ask even now, and many would have asked at the time, whether the determination of the Political Unions to march on London, in case of need, was not the chief sin and folly of the time. We think not, while feeling strong sympathy with those who come to an opposite conclusion. In judging of the right and wrong of a case so critical, every thing depends on the evidence that exists as to what the principles and powers of the opposing parties really were. This evidence we shall find disclosed in the history of the next year. Meantime, in the March and April of 1831, the great middle class, by whose intelligence and determination the Bill must be carried, believed that occasion might arise for their refusing to pay taxes, and for their marching upon London, to support the King, the Administration, and the bulk of the nation, against a small class of unyielding and interested persons. The Political Unions made known the numbers they could muster, the Chairman of the Birmingham Union declaring that they could send forth two armies, each fully worth that which had won Waterloo. On the coast of Sussex, ten thousand men declared themselves ready to march, at any moment: Northum-

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berland was prepared in like manner: Yorkshire was up and awake; and in short, it might be said that the nation was ready to go up to London, if wanted. When the mighty processions of the Unions marched to their meeting-grounds, the anti-reformers observed with a shudder that the towns were at the mercy of these mobs. The towns were at their mercy; but they were not mobs: and never were the good citizens more safe. The cry was vehement that the measure was to be carried by intimidation: and this was true. The question was whether, in this singular case, the intimidation was wrong. The Ministers were vehemently accused of resorting to popular aid, and making use of all possible supports for the carrying their measure, in violation of all established etiquette. Lord Eldon thought them extremely vulgar, it is evident. The truth was that the popular aid resorted to them; and that they did consider the times too grave for etiquette, and the matter in hand far too serious to be let drop, when a momentary vacillation on their part would bring on immediate popular convulsion. So, they did declare in public—at the Lord Mayor's Easter dinner—what Lord Eldon thought "perfectly unconstitutional"—that they had the King's confidence and good wishes: they did wait in silence to see whether it would become necessary for the Political Unions to act: and they did not retire from office when left with a majority of only one, but bore with all taunts and sneers, and preferred a neglect of propriety and precedent to a desertion of the cause to which they had pledged their fidelity. We cannot reckon any of these things, though irregular and portentous, among the sins and follies of the time, but rather among its noblest features.—Among these we should reckon also a public Declaration against the Bill, put forth by several hundreds of merchants, bankers, and eminent citizens of London: a Declaration which, though proved mistaken in its view, was in its diction and manner calm, loyal, and courageous. If the opposition of the anti-reformers generally had been more of this character, there would have been less marshalling of Political Unions.

Life of Lord Eldon, iii. 126.

Annual Register, July 1831, p. 81.

Some of the experienced old Conservatives thought it one of the sins and follies of the time that their own party made no preparation for combined action against the Bill. It was on the second reading that the Ministers had been left with a majority of one, in the fullest House ever known to have divided—the numbers being, besides the Speaker and the four Tellers, 302 to 301, making a House of 608. The Ministers did not resign on this; and the people illuminated because they did not. The Easter holidays were at hand; and immediately after, the Bill was to be considered in Committee. These Easter holidays were the time when, as the experienced old Conservatives thought, their party should have been organizing for opposition: but the party were very confident that it was quite unnecessary to take such trouble. The late vote had shown that the Whigs could not carry their measure. They were, their opponents declared, a factious set, who vulgarly staid in office as long as possible, and were preparing all possible trouble for their successors: but they were now proved too weak in the Commons to be formidable to the Lords. "All will be lost," Lord Eldon wrote in this interval, "by the confidence with which people act, and with which they persuade themselves that all will be safe. Lord Sidmouth, on the day in which the second reading of

Second Reading.

Hansard, iii. 804.

Life of Lord Eldon, iii. 125.

1831. the Bill was carried, spoke to me of the majority by which it would undoubtedly be lost and negatived. And now the few, very few individuals here whom I see, speak of the rejection of the Bill, as if it was certainly to be rejected, though no two persons agree as to what shall be the course of the measures by which its rejection can be accomplished."

Defeat of Ministers.

On the 18th of April, the Commons went into Committee on the Reform Bill; and on the 19th, Ministers were defeated on the point of reducing the number of members in the House. General Gascoyne moved that the numbers should not be reduced; and he obtained a majority of eight over Ministers. Hansard, iii. 1688.

On the 21st, or rather on the morning of the 22nd, there was another defeat, which brought matters to a crisis. The Opposition, after losing much time in talking about any thing but the question before the House, refused to go into the consideration of a question of Supply. They moved and carried an adjournment against the Chancellor of the Exchequer, leaving Ministers in a minority of 22. Hansard, iii. 1805. This act of the Opposition was looked upon, by some stretch of construction, as a refusal of the Supplies. In the morning, the Ministers offered their resignations to the King: but he would not accept them. He desired that they should go on with the Reform Bill, and get it carried as well as they could; but, unfortunately, though very naturally, he objected to the first measure which they considered essential—the dissolution of the new parliament, now in the midst of its first session.

True Crisis.

Though other parts of that mighty struggle might appear more imposing, more dangerous, more awful, in the eyes of common observers, the real crisis lay within the compass of this day—the 22nd of April. The Ministers themselves said so afterwards. When, in a subsequent season, the very ground shook with the tread of multitudes, and the broad heaven echoed with their shouts, and the peers quaked in their House, and the world seemed to the timid to be turned upside down, the Ministers were calm and secure: they knew the event to be determined, and could calculate its very date: whereas now, on this 22nd of April, they found themselves standing on a fearful Mohammedan bridge—on the sharp edge of chance, with abysses of revolution on either hand. The people were not aware of the exigency; and the Ministers were not, for the moment, aided by pressure from without. The doubt—the critical doubt—was whether the King could be persuaded to dissolve the parliament.

The probable necessity of this course, and the King's repugnance to it, had been discussed throughout London for some days, and especially on the preceding day. The Administration and the cause were injured by the understood difficulty with the sovereign; and it was in a manner perfectly unprecedented that Lord Wharncliffe, on the night of the 21st, had asked Lord Grey in the House whether Ministers had advised the King to dissolve parliament. Hansard, iii. 1741. On Lord Grey declining to answer the question, Lord Wharncliffe gave notice that he should move to-morrow an address to the King, remonstrating against such a proposed exertion of the royal prerogative.—After what happened in the other House at a later hour, there was nothing to be done but to enforce upon the King the alternative of losing his Ministers or dissolving parliament; and the next morning, Lord Grey went to the palace for the purpose

The Palace.

1831. of procuring a decision of the matter. He and a colleague or two walked quietly and separately across the Park, to avoid exciting notice. For some hours there appeared little chance of a decision; but at length the perplexed sovereign began to see his way. He was yielding—had yielded—but with strong expressions of reluctance, when that reluctance was suddenly changed into alacrity by the news which was brought him of the tone used in the House of Lords about the impossibility that he would actually dissolve parliament, undoubted as was his constitutional power to do so.—What! did they dare to meddle with his prerogative? the King exclaimed: he would presently show them what he could and would do. He had given his promise; and now he would lose no time: he would go instantly—that very moment—and dissolve parliament by his own voice.—“As soon as the royal carriages could be got ready,” his Ministers agreed. “Never mind the carriages; send for a hackney coach,” replied the King:—a saying which spread over the kingdom, and much enhanced his popularity for the moment.

Lord Durham ran down to the gate, and found but one carriage waiting;—the Lord Chancellor's. He gave orders to drive fast to Lord Albemarle's—the Master of the Horse. Lord Albemarle was at his late breakfast, but started up on the entrance of Lord Durham, asking what was the matter. “You must have the King's carriages ready instantly.”—“The King's carriages! Very well:—I will just finish my breakfast.”—“Finish your breakfast! Not you! You must not lose a moment. The King ought to be at the House.”—“Lord bless me! is there a revolution?”—“Not at this moment; but there will be if you stay to finish your breakfast.”—So the tea and roll were left, and the royal carriages drove up to the palace in an incredibly short time.—The King was ready and impatient, and walked with an unusually brisk step. And so did the royal horses, in their passage through the streets, as was observed by the curious and anxious gazers.

Meantime, the scenes which were taking place in the two Houses were such as could never be forgotten by those who witnessed, or who afterwards heard any authentic account of them.

The Lords. The peers assembled in unusual numbers at two o'clock to hear Lord Wharncliffe's motion for an address to his Majesty, praying that his Majesty would be graciously pleased not to exercise his undoubted prerogative of dissolving parliament; every one of them being in more or less expectation that his lordship's speech might be rendered unavailing by some notification from the throne, though few or none probably anticipated such a scene as took place.

Almost immediately, the Lord Chancellor left the woolsack. Could he be gone to meet the King?—Lord Shaftesbury was called to the chair, and Lord Wharncliffe rose. As soon as he had opened his lips, the Duke of Richmond, a member of the Administration, called some of their lordships to order, requesting that, as bound by the rules, they would be seated in their proper places. Hansard, iii. 1806. This looked as if the King was coming. Their lordships were angry; several rose to order at the same time, and said some sharp things as to who or what was most disorderly; so that the Duke of Richmond moved for the Standing Order to be read, that no offensive language should be used in that

1831. House. In the midst of this lordly wrangling, and of a confusion of voices rising into cries, Boom! came the sound of cannon which announced that the King was on the way!—Some of the peeresses had by this time entered, to witness the spectacle of the prorogation. For a few minutes, something like order was restored, and Lord Wharncliffe read his proposed Address, which was as strong a remonstrance, as near an approach to interference with the royal prerogative, as might be expected from the occasion.—The Lord Chancellor re-entered the House, and, without waiting for a pause, said, with strong emphasis, "I never yet heard that the Crown ought not to dissolve parliament whenever it thought fit, particularly at a moment when the House of Commons had thought fit to take the extreme and unprecedented step of refusing the Supplies."—Before he could be further heard for the cries of "Hear, hear!" shouts were intermingled of "The King! the King!" and the Lord Chancellor again rushed out of the House, rendering it necessary for Lord Shaftesbury to resume the chair. Every moment now added to the confusion. The hubbub, heard beyond the House, reached the ear of the King—reached his heart, and roused in him the strong spirit of regality. The peers grew violent, and the peeresses alarmed. Several of these high-born ladies, who had probably never seen exhibitions of vulgar wrath before, rose together, and looked about them, when they beheld their lordships below pushing and hustling, and shaking their hands in each others' faces. Hansard, iii. 1807.

Lord Mansfield at length made himself heard; and he spoke strongly of the "most awful predicament" of the King and the country, and on the conduct of Ministers in "conspiring together against the safety of the State, and of making the sovereign the instrument of his own destruction;" words which naturally caused great confusion. He was proceeding when the shout again arose "The King! the King!" and a commanding voice was heard over all, solemnly uttering "God save the King!" Lord Mansfield proceeded, however. The great doors on the right side of the throne flew open: still his lordship proceeded. Lord Durham, the first in the procession, appeared on the threshold, carrying the crown on its cushion: still his lordship proceeded. The King appeared on the threshold; and his lordship was still proceeding, when the peers on either side and behind laid hands on him, and compelled him to silence, while his countenance was convulsed with agitation. Hansard, iii. 1808.

The King had a flush on his cheek, and an unusual brightness in his eye. He walked rapidly and firmly, and ascended the steps of the throne with a kind of eagerness. He bowed right and left, and desired their lordships to be seated while the Commons were summoned. For a little time it appeared doubtful whether even the oil of anointing would calm the tossing waves of strife: but, after all, the peers were quiet sooner than the Commons.

The Commons. Hansard, iii. 1811—1823. That House too was crowded, expectant, eager, and passionate. Sir Richard Vyvyan was the spokesman of the Opposition; and a very strong one. A question of order arose, as to whether Sir Richard Vyvyan was or was not keeping within the fair bounds of his subject—which was a Reform petition; whereas he was speaking on "dissolution or no dissolution." The Speaker appears to have been agitated from the beginning: and there were several members who were not collected enough to receive his decisions with

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the usual deference. Honourable members turned upon each other, growing contradictious, sharp, angry—even abusive. Lord John Russell attempted to make himself heard, but in vain:—his was no voice to pierce through such a tumult. The Speaker was in a state of visible emotion. Sir Richard Vyvyan, however, regained a hearing; but, as soon as he was once more in full flow, Boom! came the cannon which told that the King was on his way; and the roar drowned the conclusion of the sentence. Not a word more was heard for the cheers, the cries—and even shouts of laughter—all put down together, at regular intervals, by the discharges of artillery. At one moment, Sir Robert Peel, Lord Althorp, and Sir Francis Burdett, were all using the most vehement action of command and supplication in dumb show, and their friends were labouring in vain to procure a hearing for them. The Speaker himself stood silenced by the tumult, till the cries took more and more the sound of "Shame! shame!" and more eyes were fixed upon him till he could have made himself heard, if he had not been too much moved to speak. When he recovered voice, he decided that Sir Robert Peel was entitled to address the House. With occasional uproar, this was permitted; and Sir Robert Peel was still speaking when the Usher of the Black Rod appeared at the Bar, to summon the Commons to his Majesty's presence. Sir Robert Peel continued to speak, loudly and vehemently, after the appearance of the Usher of the Black Rod: and it was only by main force, by pulling him down by the skirts of his coat, that those near him could compel him to take his seat.

The hundred members who accompanied the Speaker to the presence of the King rushed in "very tumultuously." There is an interest in the mutual addresses of Sovereign and People in a crisis like this which is not felt in ordinary times; and the words of the Speaker first, and then of the King, were listened to with extreme eagerness.

The Speaker said: "May it please your Majesty, we your Majesty's most faithful Commons approach your Majesty with profound respect;—and, Sire, in no period of our history, have the Commons House of Parliament more faithfully responded to the real feelings and interests of your Majesty's loyal, dutiful, and affectionate people; while it has been their earnest desire to support the dignity and honour of the Crown, upon which depend the greatness, the happiness, and the prosperity, of this country." Hansard, iii. 1810.

The King spoke in a firm, cheerful, and dignified tone and manner. The speech, which besides referred only to money-matters and economy, and to our state of peace with foreign powers—began and ended thus:—"I have come to meet you for the purpose of proroguing this parliament, with a view to its immediate dissolution. I have been induced to resort to this measure, for the purpose of ascertaining the sense of my people, in the way in which it can be most constitutionally and most authentically expressed, on the expediency of making such changes in the Representation as circumstances may appear to require, and which, founded upon the acknowledged principles of the Constitution, may tend at once to uphold the just rights and prerogatives of the Crown, and to give security to the liberties of the People. . . . . In resolving to recur to the sense of My People, in the present circumstances of the country, I have been influenced only by a paternal anxiety for the contentment and

PROROGATION.

1831. happiness of my subjects, to promote which, I rely with confidence on your continued and zealous assistance."

"It is over!" said those to each other who understood the crisis better than it was apprehended by the nation at large. "All is over!" whispered the anti-reformers to each other. The members of both Houses went home that April afternoon hoarse, heated, exhausted—conscious that such a scene had never been witnessed within the walls of parliament since Cromwell's days. The Ministers went home, to take some rest, knowing that all was safe:—that is, that to the people was now fairly committed the People's Cause.

Dissolution. A proclamation, declaring the dissolution of the parliament, appeared next day: and the new writs were made returnable on the 14th of June.

CHAPTER IV.

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General Election.

THE People thoroughly understood that their cause was now consigned to their own hands. In all preceding "revolutions"—to adopt the term used by the anti-reformers—they had acted, when they acted at all, under the direction of a small upper class who thought and understood for them, and used them as instruments. Now, the thinkers and leaders were of every class, and the multitude acted, not only under orders, but in concert. If for every nobleman and legislator who desired Parliamentary Reform for distinct political reasons there were hundreds of middle-class men, for every hundred middle-class men there were tens of thousands of the working classes who had an interest, an opinion and a will in the matter which made them, instead of mere instruments, political agents. The whole countless multitude of reformers had laid hold of the principle that the most secure and the shortest way of obtaining what they wanted was to obtain representation. This was a broad, clear truth which every man could understand, and on which every earnest man was disposed to act as men are wont to act on clear and broad truths: and the non-electors felt themselves called upon to put forth such power as they had, as a means to obtaining the power which they claimed. The elections were, to a wonderful extent, carried by the non-electors, by means of their irresistible power over those who had the suffrage. Times were indeed changed since the century when Leeds and Manchester had, for a short time, been allowed to send members to parliament in Cromwell's days, and had then again been quietly disfranchised, almost without a murmur on any hand. In those old days, these populous towns had been admitted to the representation because legislators, looking abroad from their point of survey, saw that in reason they ought to be. They were to be represented now because the inhabitants themselves demanded it, for reasons which it was their turn to propound. For some time they had been preparing to enforce their demand: and the first obvious occasion for action was now, when a House of Commons was to be returned whose special business it was to reform itself.

Popular Action.

The great unrepresented towns were co-operated with all over the country—even in rural hamlets, and scattered farm-steads. In such places, half a dozen labourers would club their earnings to buy a weekly newspaper (these costing sevenpence, at first price) on the second day; and the one who could read best read aloud the whole of the debates after the memorable 1st of March, to his companions, as they crowded round him in a shed, by the light of a single tallow candle. Rural artisans walked miles after working hours to the nearest towns, to learn what was posted up on the walls, and said in public houses. By the time the elections were to take place, tens of thousands of working men knew something more than the mere names of Russell, Grey, and Brougham, and their leading opponents:—they knew their ways of thinking and speaking,

1831. their aims and their plans; and this was an inestimable help in showing such political students what to do. It is true, few of these novices were very wise on their great subject, and a multitude were ignorant and prejudiced:—some wished for foreign war, and some for civil war, as a vent for their own pugnacity:—some were for persecuting their neighbours who differed from them:—and others drew glorious pictures of the wealth they should all enjoy when every man had a vote, and had voted away all the taxes: but even the most ignorant and unreasonable were in a better condition than before—more able to understand reason—more fit to be influenced by their wiser neighbours—better qualified to trust the authors and influential promoters of the great measure. As for the higher orders of non-electors, the intelligent men of the towns—by combining their lights, they easily saw what to do. They combined their will, their knowledge, and their manifest force, in Political Unions, whence they sent forth will, knowledge, and influence, over wide districts of the land. And the electors, seeing the importance of the crisis—the unspeakable importance that it should be well conducted—joined these Unions, and by their weight of character, intelligence, and station, preserved them from much folly and aimless effort, kept up the self-respect and sobriety of the best of the non-electors, and curbed the violence of the worst. Wealthy capitalists, eminent bankers, members of the late parliament, and country gentlemen, agreed over their wine that they ought to join the Political Union of the district, and went the next morning to enrol themselves. When face to face in their meetings with their neighbours of lower degree, they taught and learned much:—new openings for action appeared;—daily opportunities offered for spreading knowledge, proposing sound views, and discountenancing violence. They were startled by sudden apparitions of men of minds superior to their own—men of genius and heroism—rising up from the most depressed ranks of non-electors; and they, in their turn, were found to be imbued with that respect for men as men which is the result of superior education, but which the poor and depressed too often conceive not to exist among the idle independent, whom they are apt to call the proud. Such was the preparation going forward throughout the country while the ministers were at their work in London;—the rapid social education of all ranks, which may be regarded as another of the ever-springing blessings of the Peace, and by which the great transition from the old to the new parliamentary system was rendered safe. That the amount of violence was no greater than it was remained, and still remains, a matter of astonishment to the anti-reform party, and was a blessing scarcely hoped for on the other side. After the Three Days in Paris, in the preceding July, thoughtful Englishmen asked each other with anxiety, whether it was conceivable that their own countrymen would behave, in a similar crisis, with such chivalrous honour and such enlightened moderation as the French populace. The question was not now precisely answered, because the crisis was not similar—the British King and his Ministers being on the side of the people, and the conflict being only with a portion of the aristocracy of birth and wealth: but there was enough of intelligence and moral nobleness in the march of the English movement to inspire Englishmen with a stronger mutual respect and a brighter political hope than they had ever entertained before.

Such evidence as there was at present, was window-breaking on illumination nights, and hustlings and threatenings in the streets, at the election time, which compelled some anti-reform candidates and their agents to hide themselves. A few scattered instances of this kind of disturbance occurred in England; and in Scotland the riots were really formidable. The anti-reformers there carried all before them, from their possessing almost a monopoly of political power. These election days and illumination nights are the occasions when brawlers and thieves come forth to indulge their passions and reap their harvest: and in Edinburgh and London they made use of their opportunity, to the discredit of the popular cause. On the dissolution of parliament, the Lord Mayor sanctioned the illumination of London: and the windows of the Duke of Wellington, Mr. Baring, and other leading anti-reformers, were broken. After the Edinburgh election, the Lord Provost was attacked on the North Bridge, and with difficulty rescued by the military. We happen to know what was thought on the occasion by a reformer noted for his radicalism: "As dash went the stones," he says, "smash fell the glass, and crash came the window-frames, from nine o'clock to near midnight, reflection arose and asked seriously and severely what this meant:—was it reform? was it popular liberty? Many thousands of others who were there must have asked themselves the same questions. . . . . The reform newspapers were content to say that the riots reflected no discredit on reformers; the rioters were only 'the *blackguards* of the town.' . . . . I believe that there is now one problem solved by experience which was hidden in futurity then—namely, that the greater the number of men enfranchised, the smaller is the number of 'blackguards.'"

Riots.

Auto-biography of a Working Man, 157-8.

The election cry was "The Bill, the whole Bill, and nothing but the Bill:" and the result was that such an assemblage of reformers was returned that their opponents styled them a company of pledged delegates, and no true House of Commons. And it was certain that such a thing as they called a true House of Commons they would never more see. Out of eighty-two county members only six were opposed to the Bill. Yorkshire sent four reformers; and so did London. General Gascoyne was driven from Liverpool, Sir Richard Vyvyan from Cornwall, Sir Edward Knatchbull from Kent, and Mr. Bankes from Dorsetshire. The Duke of Newcastle could, this time, do nothing with his "own." The most remarkable defeat of the Ministerial party, but one which was sure to happen, was at Cambridge University, where Lord Palmerston and Mr. Cavendish were driven out by Mr. Goulburn and Mr. W. Peel.

New House of Commons.

Annual Register, 1831, 154.

After re-electing the Speaker, and hearing from the King's own lips a recommendation to undertake the Reform of their House, the Commons went to work again. The Bill was introduced on the 24th of June; but the second reading stood over till the 4th of July, that the Scotch and Irish Reform Bills might be brought in. The debate lasted three nights, when a division was taken on the second reading, which gave the Ministers a majority of 136 in a House of 598 members.

Second Reform Bill.

Hansard, iv. 906.

It was clear that the Ministers were so strong that they were sure of their own way in this House: but the strain upon the temper and patience of the large majority was greater than they would have supported in a meaner cause.

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When we remember that the minority sincerely believed that they were now witnessing the last days of the Constitution, we cannot wonder at their determination to avail themselves of all the forms of the House, and of every passing incident, to delay the destruction of the country. They avowed their purpose, and they adhered to it with unflinching obstinacy. The House went into Committee on the 12th of July; and it was at once evident that every borough was to be contended for, every population return questioned, every point debated on which an argument could be hung; and this, not on account of the merits of the case, but merely to protract the time, and leave room for "Fate, or Providence, or something," to interfere. If at midnight, in the hot glare of the lamps, any member dropped asleep, a piqued orator would make that a cause of delay, that he might be properly attended to to-morrow: and another time, the House would sit till the summer sunshine was glittering on the breakfast tables of the citizens, the Opposition hoping to wear out the vigilance of the proposers of the Bill. The people grew angry, and the newspapers spoke their wrath. It was all very well, they said, to insist on the fullest discussion of every principle: but to wrangle for every item, after the principle had been settled—to do this with the avowed object of awaiting accidents, and in defiance of the declared will of the nation at large, was an insolence and obstruction not to be borne. When, towards the end of the month, people began to ask when and how this was to end, the Ministers moved that the Reform business should take precedence of all other; and it was arranged that the discussion should proceed from five o'clock every day. Before August came in, however, signs appeared of an unappeased discontent on the part of the non-electors, who dreaded lest the heats of August in town and the attractions of that month in the Scotch moors should draw off their champions from their duty: and it became known in the House that a conference had taken place between the Political Unions of Birmingham, Manchester, and Glasgow, in order to agree how long they would wait. The majority in the House thought it right to intimate such facts, to prove the danger of the times. The minority called it stifling discussion by threats, and considered whether they could not be a little slower still, in assertion of their constitutional right of debate. Weeks passed on: the summer heats rose to their height, and declined: the days shortened: Hon. members, haggard and nervous, worn with eight hours per night of skirmishing and wrangling, pined for fresh air and country quietness; and still every borough, and every population statement was contested. It was the 7th of September before the Committee reported. On the 13th and two following days the Report was considered, when only a few verbal amendments were proposed. The final debate occupied the evenings of the 19th, 20th, and 21st of September; and at its close, the Bill passed the Commons by a majority of 109; the numbers for and against being 345 to 236. Both London and the country had grown tired of waiting, and had somewhat relaxed their attention when they found that the members might be relied on for remaining at their posts: but on this occasion, all were as eager as ever. The House was surrounded by crowds, who caught up the cheers within on the announcement of the majority;—cheers which were renewed so perseveringly that it seemed as if the members had no thoughts of going home. There was little sleep in London that night. The cheering ran along the

Committee.

Hansard, vii. 464.

The Bill passes the Commons.

streets, and was caught up again and again till morning. Such of the peers as were in town, awaiting their share of the business, which was now immediately to begin, must have heard the shouting, the whole night through. It is certain that it was the deliberate intention of the greater number of them to throw out the Bill very speedily. If the acclamations of that night did not raise a doubt as to the duty and safety of their course, they must have been in a mood unlike that of ordinary men, meditating in the watches of the night.

Before daylight, the news was on its way into the country; and wherever it spread, it floated the flags, and woke up the bells, and filled the air with shouts and music. In the midst of this, however, the older and graver men turned to each other with the question,—"What will the Lords do?" Lord Grey's speech in opening the debate in the House of Peers shows to those who read it now that he had a precise foresight of what the Lords would do, and particularly the Bishops. Lord Althorp, attended by a hundred of the Commons, carried up the Bill to the Peers, the day after it had passed the Lower House: but the debate took place on the question of the second reading—extending over five nights—from the 3rd to the 7th of October. It was an exceedingly fine debate, as might have been expected from its nature. Not only did the accomplishments of the noble speakers come into play, but they had never before spoken on a subject which concerned them so nearly, which they at once so thoroughly understood and so deeply felt; and their minds were roused and exercised accordingly. No position could be more dignified than that of Lord Grey. He was safe from the taunt under which the Duke of Wellington had winced, and under which many a minister has since winced—that he was the slave of popular clamour; for he could point back to the year 1786, when he voted with Mr. Pitt for shortening the duration of parliaments; and to a time before the old French revolution, when he voted for Mr. Flood's measure of Parliamentary Reform. Standing on this high ground of principled consistency, the venerable statesman was at liberty from all self-regards to be as great in his bearing as his measure was in its import. And truly great he was. From this day, for many months he was subject to a series of provocations which must often have worn his frame and sickened his spirit: but he never stooped to anger or impatience. His conscience calm and clear, his judgment settled, his knowledge and his powers concentrated in his measure, he could maintain his stand above the passions which were agitating other men. And he did maintain it, through all the personal fatigue and mental weariness of months. Through the vacillations of the King above him, and the raging and malice of the Peers around him, and the surging of the mob far below him, for which he was made responsible, he preserved an unbroken yet genial calmness which made observers feel and say that among the various causes of emotion of that time, they knew nothing so moving as the greatness of Lord Grey. On this opening night of the debate—the 3rd of October—he stood, by virtue of his experience and the meditation of half a century, like a seer, showing the issues of such procedure, on the one hand or the other, as their Lordships might adopt. Among his other warnings, that to the Bishops stands out conspicuously and prophetically. "Let me respectfully entreat those Right Reverend Prelates," he said, after an acknowledgment of their deserts and dignities, "to consider, that if this Bill should be rejected by a

First Reading in the Lords.

Hansard, vii. 928; viii. 1—340.

Debate.

Lord Grey.

The Bishops.

Hansard, vii. 967

1831. narrow majority of the lay peers, which I have reason to hope will not be the case; but if it should, and that its fate should thus, within a few votes, be decided by the votes of the heads of the Church, what will then be their situation with the country. Those Right Reverend Prelates have shown that they were not indifferent or inattentive to the signs of the times. . . . . They appear to have felt that the eyes of the country are upon them; that it is necessary for them to set their house in order, and prepare to meet the coming storm. . . . . They are the ministers of peace; earnestly do I hope that the result of their votes will be such as may tend to the tranquillity, to the peace, and happiness of the country." If the Bishops were aware that the eyes of the people were upon them, they seem to have been ignorant or thoughtless of one of the reasons why. The people, down to the very lowest of the populace, were willing to bear more on this question from the most aristocratic of the lay peers than from any of the spiritual peers. There was no man anywhere so ignorant as not to see that much allowance was to be made for noblemen of ancient lineage, called on to part with hereditary borough property, and with political influence which became more valuable from one session of parliament to another. The Bishops had no plea for such allowance—commoners by birth as they were, having no interest in borough property, and no hereditary associations making war against present exigencies. If they really approved of our representative system, they should naturally desire its purification: and the whole people looked to see whether they did or not. If they did, they would show themselves indeed shepherds of the flock: if not, they must be regarded as the humble servants of the hereditary aristocracy; and their Church would be distrusted in proportion to the worldliness of her prelates. They did their utmost to ruin themselves and their Church. One Bishop alone—the Bishop of Norwich—voted in favour of the Bill. Twenty-one—exactly enough to turn the scale—voted against the Bill: the majority by which it was thrown out Hansard, viii. 340. being 41. It was proclaimed over the whole kingdom, and it will never be forgotten, that it was the Bishops who threw out the Reform Bill. Newspapers in mourning edges told this, in the course of a day or two, to every listener in the land. Every schoolboy knew it: every beggar could cast it in the teeth of footmen in purple liveries on the steps of great houses. For many months—till some time after the Reform Bill became the law of the land—it was not safe for a Bishop to appear in public in any article of sacerdotal dress. Insults followed if apron or hat showed themselves in the streets. And the Bench gained nothing by yielding at last, because every body knew they could not help it. While they imputed their yielding to a love of peace, they could not complain if the people assigned it to a lack of courage. Whether the deficiency was of sagacity, or knowledge, or independence, or principle, it did more to injure the Church throughout the empire than all hostility of Catholics and Dissenters together. Among the twenty-two anti-reform voters in the Lords, on the final reading, a few months after this, there is no Bishop's name. Not the less for this was it every where still repeated that it was the Bishops that threw out the Reform Bill, till no child old enough to understand the words could ever forget them.

The peers were not tempting fate in blindness. They knew what was said and thought of them, and what was threatened in case of their refusal to surrender their borough interests. They were aware, if they read the newspapers, that there was a change in the form of the popular question which every man had been asking his neighbour. Instead of the question, "What will the Lords do?" men were now asking, "What must be done with the Lords?" and the journals, having taken for granted that four hundred peers were not to stand in the way of an essential improvement desired by king and people, were beginning to discuss whether the king or the people should take the peers in hand:—whether, as this was understood to mean, the king should create so many new peers as to obtain a majority for the Bill, or the people should refuse to pay taxes till they had obtained a better representation. If the Lords did not read the newspapers—and Lord Grey gave great and general offence, in the midst of his popularity, by declaring that he did not—they had other means of information. On the day of the loss of the Bill, Lord Eldon wrote, before going to the work of mischief, "Making new peers to pass it has been much talked of; but, unless our calculation of numbers is erroneous, and most grossly so, audacity itself could not venture to attempt a sufficient supply of new Peers." Again, on the 5th of October, a remarkable scene had taken place in the House of Lords, before entering on the topic of the night. During the debate, more and more peeresses attended every evening, bringing their daughters and relations, for whom seats were placed below the bar. Instead of two or three ladies, quietly listening behind a curtain, there was now an assemblage on rows of chairs, smiling, frowning, fidgetting, indicating their agitation in every way short of clapping and groaning. The space about the throne was thronged with listening foreigners and members of the other House: and on this evening, the conspicuous figure of the intelligent Hindoo, Rammohun-Roy, was in the midst of the group, his spreading turban attracting many eyes, and his mobile countenance varying with every turn of the discussion. All these, and a very full House of Peers, were present when evidence was brought forward of what the people were thinking of doing with the Peers, in case of too obstinate a stand for the rotten boroughs. On occasion of the presentation of petitions, information was given of something ominous which had taken place at a meeting of 100,000 people at Birmingham. After one orator there had, quite unconstitutionally, asked repeatedly and significantly, the question whether the Lords would "dare" to reject the Bill, another had declared his intention to pay no taxes till the Bill should have passed; and his declaration had been received with loud cheers. On his desiring those who agreed with him to hold up their hands, a countless multitude of hands was held up: and on his asking for a sign of dissent, not a single hand was held up. While all the Peers who spoke upon this news, from Lord Chancellor Brougham to his predecessor Lord Eldon, denounced such proceedings as unconstitutional, no peer could, from that hour, be supposed ignorant of what he was doing in driving the people and the sovereign to one or the other of these methods of procuring a law which all but a small fraction of society desired and chose to obtain. Yet, on the 7th, they threw out the Bill, by a majority in which they gloried, as being much larger than the ministers had anticipated. Their expectation was that all would now go well. Lord Grey had declared, that by this measure the Administration would stand or fall. The measure having been lost, the Administration must fall.

Life of Lord Eldon, iii. 147.

Hansard, vii. 1308.

Hansard, vii. 1323.

The Bill Lost.

1831.

Life of Lord Eldon, iii. 152.

After relating how the final debate lasted till between six and seven in the morning, Lord Eldon wrote, "The fate of the Bill, therefore, is decided. . . . The night was made interesting by the anxieties of all present. Perhaps fortunately the mob would not on the outside wait so long as it was before Lords left the inside of the House." Their lordships got home unmolested that autumn morning, and awaited joyfully the tidings of the fall of the Administration. But they had far other news to hear. The King meant to prorogue parliament immediately, in order to a speedy re-assembling, and going over of the whole matter again.

Prorogation.

Hansard, viii. 928.

This was a prospect full of weariness and anxiety to every body. As for the King, he came down to the House on the 20th of October, in temper and spirits as yet apparently unchanged; and his Speech manifested the unrelaxed resolution of his Ministers. It earnestly recommended the careful preservation of tranquillity throughout the country, during the suspense in which the great question was held. As for the peers, some believed, and with too much excuse, that the hour of revolution was really come. "Our day here yesterday was tremendously alarming," Lord Eldon had written a week before this time. Many windows had been broken, several peers insulted in the streets, and Lord Londonderry struck insensible from his horse, by the blow of a stone.

Life of Lord Eldon, iii. 153.

Lord Eldon, while writing of "the immense mob of Reformers," admits that there was "hardly a decent looking man among them:" and it was indeed the case that the excitement of the time had called out all the disorderly part of society into view and action. Not only the ignorant and violent desirers of Parliamentary Reform, but thieves and vagabonds made use of the opportunity to stir up the passions under whose cover they might pursue their aims of plunder. This was made clear by the presence of well-known London faces, not only at the window-breaking at the West end, but in the mobs at Derby and Bristol, where the most serious damage was done to the Reform cause. "Every where," Lord Eldon said, "the mischief is occasioned by strangers from other parts coming to do mischief." The fact was clear: only—Lord Eldon called these strangers "reformers," while the police called them "the swell mob." Disastrous indeed was the injury they did.

Hansard, viii. 385. Vote of Confidence.

The great body of reformers stood firm and calm, because the government did so. The House of Commons had immediately followed up the rejection of the Bill by a vote of confidence in Ministers which removed all fear of their resigning: and calm patience was certain to carry the great objects of the time. But then came these incendiaries, stirring up riots in Derby and Nottingham first, and afterwards at Bristol—not only discrediting the Reform cause, but doing a yet more terrible mischief by perplexing and alarming the King. The King remained to all appearance firm till after the prorogation of Parliament, the Derby and Nottingham riots having meantime occurred: but the more fearful affair at Bristol shook his decision and his courage; and it is understood that from that date, the work of his Ministers was more arduous than before.

Riots at Derby.

Annual Register, 1831, Chron. 161.

At Nottingham.

At Derby, some rioters were consigned to jail for window-breaking: and the jail was carried by the mob, the prisoners released, and several lives lost after the arrival of the military.—At Nottingham, the Castle was burnt—

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avowedly because it was the property of the Duke of Newcastle. To all to whom the name and fame of the devoted Lucy Hutchinson and her spouse are dear, this event was a mournful one: but the walls remain, and the beauty of the site cannot be impaired while any part of the building meets the eye. The Duke recovered £21,000 from the county, as damages, and certainly appeared to suffer much less under the event than his respectable neighbours of the Reform party. He evidently enjoyed his martyrdom.

Annual Register, 1832, Chron. 108.

The Bristol mobs have always been noted for their brutality: and the outbreak now was such as to amaze and confound the whole kingdom. It will ever remain a national disgrace that such materials existed in such quantity for London rogues to operate upon. Nothing like these Bristol riots had happened since the Birmingham riots in 1791.

London rogues could have had no such power as in this case if the political and moral state of Bristol had not been bad. Its political state was disgraceful. The venality of its elections was notorious. It had a close corporation, between whom and the citizens there was no community of feeling on municipal subjects. The lower parts of the city were the harbourage of probably a worse sea-port populace than any other place in England, while the police was ineffective and demoralized. There was no city in which a greater amount of savagery lay beneath a society proud, exclusive, and mutually repellent, rather than enlightened and accustomed to social co-operation. These are circumstances which go far to account for the Bristol riots being so fearfully bad as they were. Of this city, Sir Charles Wetherell—then at the height of his unpopularity as a vigorous opponent of the Reform Bill—was Recorder; and there he had to go, in the last days of October, in his judicial capacity. Strenuous efforts had been made to exhibit before the eyes of the Bristol people the difference between the political and judicial functions of their Recorder, and to show them that to receive the Judge with respect was not to countenance his political course: yet the symptoms of discontent were such as to induce the Mayor, Mr. Pinney, to apply to the Home Office for military aid. Lord Melbourne sent down some troops of horse, which were quartered within reach, in the neighbourhood of the city. It was an unfortunate circumstance that, owing to the want of a common interest between the citizens and the corporation, scarcely any gentlemen offered their services as special constables but such as were accustomed to consider the lower classes with contempt as a troublesome rabble, and rather relished an occasion for defying and humbling them. Such was the preparation made in the face of the fact that Sir Charles Wetherell could not be induced to relinquish his public entry, though warned of danger by the magistrates themselves; and of the other important fact that the London rogues driven from the metropolis by the new police were known to be infesting every place where there was hope of confusion and spoil.

Monthly Repository, v. 843—852.

On Saturday, October 29th, Sir Charles Wetherell entered Bristol in pomp: and before he reached the Mansion House at noon, he must have been pretty well convinced, by the hootings and throwing of stones, that he had better have foregone the procession. For some hours, the special constables and the noisy mob in front of the Mansion House exchanged discourtesies of an em-

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Annual Register, 1831, Chron. 172.

phatic character: but there was no actual violence till night. At night, the Mansion House was attacked; and the Riot Act was read; but the military were not brought down, as they ought to have been, to clear the streets. The Mayor had "religious scruples," and was "humane;" and his indecision was not overborne by any aid from his brother magistrates. When the military were brought in, it was after violence had been committed, and when the passions of the mob were much excited. Sir Charles Wetherell escaped from the city that night. During the dark hours, sounds were heard provocative of further riot;—shouts in the streets, and the hammering of workmen who were boarding up the lower windows of the Mansion House and the neighbouring dwellings.—On the Sunday morning, the rioters broke into the Mansion House, without opposition: and from the time they got into the cellars, all went wrong. Hungry wretches and boys broke the necks of the bottles, and Queen Square was strewed with the bodies of the dead drunk. The soldiers were left without orders; and their officers without that sanction of the magistracy in the absence of which they could not act, but only parade; and in this parading, some of the soldiers naturally lost their tempers, and spoke and made gestures on their own account which did not tend to the soothing of the mob. This mob never consisted of more than five or six hundred; and twenty thousand orderly persons attended the churches and chapels that day, to whom no appeal on behalf of peace and the law was made. At a word through the pastors from the magistrates, indicating how they should act, the heads of these families could easily have co-operated to secure the protection of the city. The mob declared openly what they were going to do; and they went to work unchecked—armed with staves and bludgeons from the quays, and with iron palisades from the Mansion House—to break open and burn the Bridewell, the Jail, the Bishop's palace, the Custom House, and Queen's Square. They gave half an hour's notice to the inhabitants of each house in the Square, which they then set fire to in regular succession, till two sides, each measuring 550 feet, lay in smoking ruins. The bodies of the drunken were seen roasting in the fire. The greater number of the rioters were believed to be under twenty years of age: and some were mere children—some Sunday scholars, hitherto well-conducted: and it may be questioned whether one in ten knew any thing of the Reform Bill, or the offences of Sir Charles Wetherell.—On the Monday morning, after all actual riot seemed to be over, the soldiery at last made two slaughterous charges. More horse arrived, and a considerable body of foot soldiers; and the constabulary became active; and from that time, the city was in a more orderly state than the residents were accustomed to see it.

The inhabitants at large were not disposed to acquiesce quietly in the disgrace of their city. Public meetings were held, to petition the government to make inquiry into the causes and circumstances of the disturbances, the petitioners emphatically declaring their opinion, "that Bristol owed all the calamities they deplored to the system under the predominance of which they had taken place." The magistrates were brought to trial; and so was Colonel Brereton, who was understood to be in command of the whole of the military. The result of that court-martial caused more emotion throughout the kingdom than all the slaughtering and burning, and the subsequent executions which marked that fearful season.

It was a year before the trial of the magistrates was entered upon. The result was the acquittal of the mayor, and the consequent relinquishment of the prosecution of his brother magistrates. While every one saw that great blame rested somewhere, no one was disposed to make a victim of a citizen who found himself, at a time of extreme emergency, in the midst of a system which rendered a proper discharge of his duty impossible. All agreed that Bristol must no longer be misgoverned; but no one desired to punish the one man, or the three or five men in whose term of office the existing corruption and inefficiency were made manifest by a sort of accident. Instead of complaining that Mr. Pinney and the other aldermen escaped, men mourned that Colonel Brereton had not lain under the same conditions of impunity.

Spectator, 1832, p. 1030.

The magistrates believed that they had done their part in desiring that the commanders of the military would act according to their discretion. Colonel Brereton believed that, before he could act, he must have a more express sanction from the magistracy than he could obtain. Between them, nothing was done. The Mayor was not the only "humane" man. Colonel Brereton also was "humane." He saw a crowd of boys and women, with a smaller proportion of men, collected without apparent aim, and in a mood to be diverted, as he thought, from serious mischief. While inwardly chafing at being left without authority—not empowered to do any thing but ride about—he rode in among them, made use of his popularity, spoke to them, and let them shake hands with him. This would have been well, if all had ended well. But the event decided the case against him. He knew how unfavourably these acts would tell on his trial. Full of keen sensibilities, nothing in him was more keen than his sense of professional honour. He sank under the conflict between his civil and professional conscience. He was crushed in the collision between the natural and the conventional systems of social and military duty in which he found himself entangled. He had been too much of the man to make war, without overruling authorization, on the misguided and defenceless; and he found himself too much of the soldier to endure conventional dishonour. His trial began on the 9th of the next January. For four days, he struggled on in increasing agony of mind. On the night of the 12th, he, for the first time, omitted his visit at bedtime to the chamber of his children—his two young motherless daughters: he was heard walking for hours about his room: and when the court assembled in the morning, it was to hear that the prisoner had shot himself through the heart.—The whole series of events at Bristol became more and more disconnected in the general mind with the subject of the Reform Bill, as facts came out which showed that other proximate causes of disturbance would have, no doubt, wrought the same effects, sooner or later, as well as the one which chanced to occur. The question which did, from that time, lie deep down in thoughtful minds was, how long our Christian profession and our heathen practice—our social and military combinations—were to be supposed compatible, after a man who united in himself the virtues of both had been driven to suicide by their contrariety.

Annual Register, 1832, p. 50.

Annual Register, 1832, Chron. 14.

It is necessary to note the social disturbances which followed upon the re-

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jection of the second Reform Bill: but it is no less necessary to point out that the turbulence of this, as of all seasons, is easy to observe, while no account can be given which can represent to the imagination the prevailing calmness and order of the time. Calmness and order present no salient point for narrative and description: but their existence must not therefore be overlooked. A truly heroic state of self-discipline and obedience to law prevailed over the land, while in particular spots the turbulent were able to excite the giddy and the ignorant to riot. The nation was steadily rising to its most heroic mood; that mood in which, the next year, it carried through the sublime enterprise which no man, in the darkest moment, had any thought of surrendering.

Prevalence of Order.

CHAPTER V.

1831.

THE preparations for the renewal of the struggle for Parliamentary Reform began immediately after the prorogation, and were of a very serious character on every hand. As might be expected from the protraction of the quarrel, each party went further in its own direction; and the King, whose station was in the middle, became occasionally irresolute, through anxiety—an anxiety which plainly affected his health.

National Political Union.

On the 31st of October, the London Political Union held an important meeting which was so fully attended that the multitude adjourned to Lincoln's Inn Fields. The object of the day was to decree and organize a National Union, the provincial associations to be connected with it as branches, sending delegates to the central Board. Thus far, all had gone well, as regarded these Unions. The administration had not been obliged to recognise their existence, while undoubtedly very glad of the fact. Whether their existence was constitutional was one of the two great questions of the day. Hitherto, the government were not obliged to discuss it, in public or private, or to give any opinion; for till now, the Unions had done nothing objectionable. Now, however, the difficulty began. The less informed and more violent members of the London Union insisted upon demanding Universal Suffrage, and other matters not included in the Bill, while the wiser majority chose to adhere to their watchword, "The Bill, the whole Bill, and nothing but the Bill." The minority seceded, and constituted a Metropolitan Union of their own, whose avowed object was to defeat the Ministerial measure, in order to obtain a more thorough opening of the representation. In their advertisements, they declared all hereditary privileges and all distinction of ranks to be unnatural and vicious; and invited the working men throughout the country to come up to their grand meeting at White Conduit House, on the 7th of November, declaring that such a display of strength must carry all before it. The government brought soldiery round the Metropolis, had an army of special constables sworn in—all in a quiet way—and as quietly communicated with the Union leaders. On the 5th, the Hatton Garden magistrates informed these leaders that their proposed proceedings were illegal. A deputation begged admission to the presence of the Home Secretary. Lord Melbourne saw them, and quietly pointed out to them which passages of their address were seditious, if not treasonable, involving in the guilt of treason all persons who attended their meeting for the purpose of promoting the objects proposed. The leaders at once abandoned their design. The ministers were blamed for letting them go, and taking no notice of the seditious advertisement: but no one who, at this distance of time, compares the Melbourne and the Sidmouth days can doubt that the forbearance was as wise as it was kind. What the offenders needed was better knowledge, not penal restraint, as their conduct in disbanding plainly showed. The peace

Auto-biography of a Working Man, p. 240.

Metropolitan Union.

Annual Register, 1831, p. 297.

1831. of society lost nothing, and the influence of the government gained much, by the ministers showing themselves willing to enlighten rather than to punish ignorance, and to reserve their penalties (where circumstances allowed it) for wilful and obstinate violations of the law. The affair, however, alarmed the sovereign and the more timid of the aristocracy who had hitherto supported the Reform measure.

At the same time, Lord Grey was beset by deputations from all ranks and classes, urging the shortening of the recess to the utmost, and the expediting the measure by all possible means; and especially by inducing the King to create peers in sufficient numbers to secure the immediate passage of the Bill through the House of Lords. All the interests of the kingdom were suffering under suspense and disappointment, and the popular indignation against the obstructive peers was growing dangerous. This proposition of a creation of peers was the other great question of the day.

Question of a Creation of Peers.

And seldom or never has there been a question more serious. Men saw now that the word "revolution," so often in the mouths of the anti-reformers, might prove to be not so inapplicable as had been supposed: that, if the peers should not come immediately and voluntarily, and by the light of their own convictions, into harmony with the other two powers of the government, it would prove true that, as they were themselves saying, "the balance of the Constitution was destroyed." Was it not already so? it was asked. Unless a miraculous enlightenment was to be looked for between October and December, was there any alternative but civil war, and, in some way or another, overbearing the Lords? Civil war was out of the question for such a handful of obstructives. The King, Commons, and People, could not be kept waiting much longer for the few who showed no sign of yielding; and it would be the best kindness to all parties to get the obstructives out-voted, by an exertion of that kingly power whose existence nobody disputed, however undesirable might be its frequent exercise. From day to day was this consideration urged upon the Premier, who never made any reply to it. It was not a time when men saw the full import of what they asked; nor was this a subject on which the Prime Minister could open his lips to deputations. He must have felt, like every responsible and every thoughtful man, that no more serious and mournful enterprise could be proposed to any minister than to destroy the essential character of any one of the three component parts of the government; and that, if such a destruction should prove to be a necessary condition of the requisite purification of another, it was the very hardest and most fearful of conditions. Men were talking lightly, all over the kingdom, of the necessity of swamping the opposition of the peers: they were angry, and with reason, with the living men who made the difficulty; and nobody contradicted them when they said that the extinction of the wisdom of these particular men in the national counsels would be no great loss: but they did not consider that the existing Roden and Newcastle, and Eldon and Rolle, were not the great institution of the British House of Lords, whose function shone back through the history of a thousand years, and might shine onwards through a thousand years more, if the ignorance and selfishness of its existing majority could be overcome on the present occasion by a long patience and a large forbearance. Lord Grey was the last man to degrade his "order," if the necessity could by any means be avoided. It was his first object to carry the Reform of the Commons; but it would well nigh have broken his heart to be compelled to do it through the degradation of the Lords. At this time, while, from his silence, multitudes believed what they wished, and confidently expected a large creation of peers, it is now known that he had not yet proposed any such measure to the King.

The Waverers.

One consequence of the prevalence of an expectation of a batch of new peers was the parting off from the obstructive Lords of a large number who were called the Waverers. There is always such a set of people in such times; and greatly do they always embarrass the calculations of the best informed. These kept the issue in uncertainty up to the last moment. On the one part were the honest and enlightened peers who saw that the end of borough-corruption was come. On the other part were the honest and unenlightened, or the selfish who would not have our institutions touched on any pretence whatever; and between them now stood the Waverers, hoping to keep things as they were, but disposed to yield voluntarily, if they could not conquer, rather than be put down by an incursion of numbers.

Gravity of the Time.

Proclamation against Political Unions.

Life of Lord Eldon, iii. 163.

Annual Register, 1831, p. 297.

There was something unusually solemn in the meeting of parliament on the 6th of December. It may surprise men now, and it will surprise men more hereafter, to remark the tone of awe-struck expectation in which men of sober mind, of cheerful temper, and even of historical learning (that powerful antidote to temporary alarms), spoke and wrote of the winter of 1831-2. A government proclamation, issued on the 22nd of November, with the aim of putting down Political Unions, was found to be as ineffectual as such proclamations always are against associations which can change their rules and forms at pleasure. It appeared strange that the ministers should now begin to make war upon the Unions, when their policy hitherto had been to let them alone: a policy befitting men able to learn by the experience of their predecessors in the case of the Catholic Association. There was a general feeling of disappointment, as at an inconsistency, when the proclamation appeared. It has since become known that the Administration acted under another will than their own in this matter. In December, Lord Eldon had an interview with the Duke of Wellington, of which he wrote, "I sat with him near an hour, in deep conversation and most interesting. Letters *that he wrote to a great personage* produced the proclamation against the Unions. But if parliament will not interfere further, the proclamation will be of little use—I think, of no use." It was certainly, at present, of no use. The National Union immediately put out its assertion that the proclamation did not apply to it, nor to the great majority of Unions then in existence. So there sat the monstrous offspring of this strange time, vigilant, far spreading, intelligent, and of incalculable force—a power believed in its season to be greater than that of King, Lords, and Commons: there it sat, watching them all, and ready to take up any duty which any one of them let drop, and force it back into the most reluctant hands.—A dark demon was, at the same time, brooding over the land. It chills one's heart now to read the Cholera proclamations and orders of that year, and the suggestions of Boards of Health, to which men looked for comfort, but from which they received much alarm. Men were not then able to conceive of a mild plague: and what they had heard of the Cholera carried back their imaginations to the plagues of the middle ages. Among many dis-

The Cholera.

1831.

Order in Council, Oct. 20, 1831.

The Unknown Tongues.

Life of Dr. Arnold, i. 302, 3.

Opening of the Session. Hansard, ix. 1.

mal recommendations from authority, therefore, we find one which it almost made the public ill to read of:—that, when the sick could not be carried to cholera hospitals, their abodes should be watched and guarded, to prevent communication—that the word "SICK" should be conspicuously painted on the front of the dwelling, while there were patients there, and the word "CAUTION" for some weeks afterwards. Men began to think of the nightly bell and dead cart, and of grass growing in the streets, and received with panic the news of the actual appearance of the disease in various parts of the island at the same time. In the truthful spirit of history, it must be told that a large and thoughtful class of society were deeply moved and impressed at this time by what was taking place in Edward Irving's chapel and sect. Men and women were declared to have the gift of Unknown Tongues; and the manifestations of the power (whatever in the vast range of the nervous powers of Man it might be) were truly awe-striking. Some laughed then, as many laugh now: but it may be doubted whether any thoughtful person could laugh in face of the facts. We have the testimony of a man who could never be listened to without respect, of a man whose heart and mind were not only naturally cheerful, but anchored on a cheerful faith—as to what was the aspect of that season to such men as himself. In reply to some question about the Irvingite gift, Dr. Arnold writes, "If the thing be real, I should take it merely as a sign of the coming of the day of the Lord—the only use, as far as I can make out, that ever was derived from the gift of tongues. I do not see that it was ever made a vehicle of instruction, or ever superseded the study of tongues, but that it was merely a sign of the power of God, a man being for the time transformed into a mere instrument to utter sounds which he himself understood not. . . . . However, whether this be a real sign or no, I believe that 'the day of the Lord' is coming, *i. e.*, the termination of one of the great ἀιῶνες" (ages) "of the human race, whether the final one of all or not: that I believe no created being knows or can know. The termination of the Jewish ἀιὼν in the first century, and of the Roman ἀιὼν in the fifth and sixth, were each marked by the same concurrence of calamities, wars, tumults, pestilences, earthquakes, &c., all marking the time of one of God's peculiar seasons of visitation." . . . . "My sense of the evil of the times, and to what prospects I am bringing up my children, is overwhelmingly bitter. All the moral and physical world appears so exactly to announce the coming of the 'great day of the Lord,' *i. e.*, a period of fearful visitation, to terminate the existing state of things—whether to terminate the whole existence of the human race, neither man nor angel knows—that no entireness of private happiness can possibly close my mind against the sense of it." Thus could the thoughtful—active in the duties of life—feel at this time: and when men of business proposed to each other any of the ordinary enterprises of their calling, they were sure to encounter looks of surprise, and be asked how any thing could be done while the Cholera and the Reform Bill engrossed men's minds. At the same time, London was overhung with heavy fogs; and that sense of indisposition was prevalent—that vague restlessness and depression—which are observable in the seasons when cholera manifests itself. When the King went down to the House, to open the session on the 6th of December, it was observed that he did not look well; and the topics of the speech—the disputed Bill, the pestilence, the distress, the riots—were not the most cheerful. It was under such influences as these that parties came together in parliament, for what all knew to be the final struggle on the controversy of the time.

Third Reform Bill.

Hansard, ix. 156.

On the 12th of December, Lord John Russell moved for leave to bring in a new Reform Bill. It was to be not less efficient than the last, and the few alterations made tended to render it more so. There was now also a new census—that of the year then closing—so that the census of 1821, with all the difficulties which hung about it, might be dismissed. The Bill was read a first time. The debate on the second reading began on Friday the 16th, and was continued the next evening, concluding early in the morning of Sunday the 18th, when the majority was 162 in a House of 486. The majority was a very large one; and ministers might rest on that during the Christmas recess: but the spirit of opposition to reform in general, and to this Bill in particular, was growing more fierce from day to day.

Hansard, ix. 546.

Hansard, ix. 651.

The House met again on the 17th of January, and on the 20th went into Committee on the Bill. It is amusing to read the complaints of the anti-reformers about being hurried in Committee—as if the provisions of the Bill were perfectly new to them. Some changes had been introduced since the long summer nights, of which so many had been spent in the discussion of the measure, and these (due mainly to the use of the new census) were considered with all possible dilatoriness. By no arts of delay, however, could the minority of the Committee protract its sittings beyond the 9th of March. The Report was considered on the 14th. When, on the 19th, the third reading was moved for, Lord Mahon, seconded by Sir John Malcolm, made the last effort employed in the House of Commons against the Bill. He moved that it should be read that day six months; and a debate of three nights ensued—worn out as all now felt the subject to be. Worn out as all felt the subject to be, there was a freshness given to it by the thought that must have been in every considerate mind, that here the people's representatives were ending their preparations for a great new period;—that they had done their share, and must now await the doubtful event—the one party expecting revolution if the Bill did become law, and the other if it did not. All felt assured that they should not have to discuss a fourth Bill, and that the issue now rested finally with the Lords. At such a moment, the words of the leaders are weighed with a strong interest. "At this, the last stage of the Reform Bill," said Lord Mahon, "on the brink of the most momentous decision to which, not only this House, but, I believe, any legislative assembly in any country, ever came—when the real alternative at issue is no longer—between Reform or no Reform, but between a moderate Reform on the one hand, and a revolutionary Reform on the other—at such a moment, it is with feelings of no ordinary difficulty that I venture to address you."—Lord John Russell's closing declaration, when the last division had yielded a majority of 116, in a House of 594, was this: "With respect to the expectations of the government, he would say that in proposing this measure they had not acted lightly, but after much consideration which had induced them to think a year ago, that a measure of this kind was necessary, if they meant to stand between the abuses which they wished to correct, and the convulsions which they desired to avoid. He was convinced that if parliament should refuse to enter-

Hansard, xi. 114.

Hansard, xi. 780.

1832.

tain a measure of this nature, they would place in collision that party which, on the one hand, opposed all Reform in the Commons House of Parliament, and that which, on the other, desired a Reform extending to universal suffrage. The consequence of this would be, that much blood would be shed in the struggle between the contending parties, and he was perfectly persuaded that the British Constitution would perish in the conflict.—I move, Sir, that this Bill do pass." It passed: and then "the next question, 'That this be the title of the Bill—A Bill to amend the Representation of the people of England and Wales,' was carried by acclamation.—Lord John Russell and Lord Althorp were ordered to carry the Bill to the Lords, and to request the concurrence of their lordships to the same."

Hansard, xi. 855.

Final passage through the Commons. Hansard, xi. 858.

When they discharged their errand, three days afterwards—on Monday, March 26th—they were attended by a large number of members of their own House. The first reading in the Lords took place immediately; and the second, which was to be a period of critical debate, was fixed for the 5th of April, but, for reasons of convenience, did not begin till the 9th.—Already, on this first night, there was a defection of waverers from the late majority—several peers intimating their intention of voting the Bill into Committee, some in hopes that it might be improved there into something good, and others because there was now less danger in passing the Bill than in refusing it. This conduct, after the anti-reformers had strained every nerve to bring up before the King's face all the opposition that could be aroused throughout the British islands—Lord Roden having presented at the levée on the 28th of February a petition against Reform signed by 230,000 Irish Protestants—discouraged some members of their Lordships' House, and exasperated others; so that the conflict of passions within the House was almost as fierce as between their House and the Unions.—The Duke of Buckingham did what he could to accommodate matters all round by promising that, if their Lordships would throw out the Bill on the second reading, he would himself immediately bring in a Reform Bill, by which representatives should be given to all the large towns, and some consolidation of boroughs be effected. Absurd as was the supposition that the country would give up its own Bill for one from the Duke of Buckingham, the incident is worth noting as a proof that the high Conservatives were giving way—were surrendering their main arguments of antiquarian analogy—and becoming eager to avow themselves reformers.

First Reading in the Lords.

Hansard, xi. 861, 864.

Autobiography of a Working Man, p. 241.

Hansard, xii. 1.

The deepest anxiety that had yet been felt was about the division on the question of the second reading in the Lords. The staunch Tories saw that it was "too clear," as Lord Eldon said, that their own party would split on this question, and that then it was to be feared the Bill would pass. The Reform Lords saw that another triumph of their opponents would be the doom of their House; while they were by no means sure that the Bill would pass even in case of victory now; for the event would be determined by the waverers, who could not be depended on at the last moment. The debate extended over the nights from the 9th to the 13th of April. It was bright morning on the 14th when the votes were taken. The lights had grown yellower and dimmer in the fresh daylight, the faces of the wearied legislators had appeared more and more haggard and heated; and at last, the slanting rays of the

Debate and Division.

1832.

morning sun shone full in upon the woolsack, as the keen eyes of the Chancellor shot their glances, as wakeful as ever, from under the great wig. The attendance of strangers was as full as it had been twelve hours before; for it was not a scene which men would miss for the sake of food and sleep. It was a quarter past seven on Friday morning, when the House adjourned, after yielding a majority of nine to the Administration. Hansard, xii. 454.

Annual Register, 1832, p. 146.

In a few hours, lists were handed about which showed how the minority of forty-one of six months before had been changed into a majority of nine. Seventeen peers had turned round. Twelve who had been absent before, now voted for the Bill: and ten who had voted against it before, now absented themselves. Among the twelve were the Archbishop of York, and the Bishops of London, St. David's, Worcester, and Chester. Among the ten was the Bishop of Peterborough. It was the bishops who saved the Bill this time: but their deed did not restore the credit their order had lost in October.

Pressure from without.

The Easter recess, which postponed the meeting of the Houses till the 7th of May, now afforded time for the people to apply that "pressure from without" which might be necessary to prevent the waverers from spoiling the Bill in Committee. This "pressure from without" was spoken of by the peers with an abhorrence and contempt in which it is impossible for any one who appreciates their function not to sympathize. But they had brought it upon themselves; and now they must bear it. The Birmingham Political Union met on the 27th of April, and invited all the Unions of the counties of Warwick, Worcester, and Stafford, to congregate at Newhall Hill in Birmingham on the day of the reassembling of parliament. Monster meetings were held in all the large towns, and monster petitions sent to the King to yield to the necessity for creating more peers. The Edinburgh meeting, 60,000 strong, was held before the windows of Charles X. at Holyrood: and there he saw the spectacle of an orderly assemblage met to express their concord with their sovereign, and their determination to aid him in obtaining for them the rights to which he was able to see that time had given birth. The cheering of that multitude for "King William, the father of his country," must have gone to the exile's heart. The petitions to the King and the Lords from Liverpool, Manchester, Sheffield, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Paisley, Dundee, and indeed from every populous place in the land, were in exactly the same strain, and nearly in the same words. That from Birmingham implored the peers "not to drive to despair a high-minded, generous, and fearless people, or to urge them on, by a rejection of their claims, to demands of a much more extensive nature, but rather to pass the Reform Bill into a law, unimpaired in any of its great parts and provisions." The National Union, on the 3rd of May, spoke out plainly enough. Its petition informed the Lords, that if they denied or impaired the Bill, "there was reason to expect that the payment of taxes would cease, that other obligations of society would be disregarded, and that the ultimate consequence might be the utter extinction of the privileged orders." Among the serious and solemn petitions which it is a duty to place upon record, there was a fable put forth which should stand beside them, as having done as much for the great cause as any or all of them. It has passed into a proverb; but its original delivery should be registered, for the benefit

Meetings and Petitions.

Spectator, 1832, 410.

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of a far future. At a meeting at Taunton, a clergyman, who felt himself equally at home and free to speak the truth among peers and cottagers—after declaring in regard to the Bishops that he "could not but blush to have seen so many dignitaries of the Church arrayed against the wishes and happiness of the people," went on to say, "As for the possibility of the House of Lords preventing ere long a Reform of Parliament, I hold it to be the most absurd notion that ever entered into human imagination. I do not mean to be disrespectful, but the attempt of the Lords to stop the progress of Reform reminds me very forcibly of the great storm of Sidmouth, and of the conduct of the excellent Mrs. Partington on that occasion. In the winter of 1824, there set in a great flood upon that town—the tide rose to an incredible height—the waves rushed in upon the houses, and every thing was threatened with destruction. In the midst of this sublime and terrible storm, Dame Partington, who lived upon the beach, was seen at the door of her house with mop and pattens, trundling her mop, squeezing out the sea water, and vigorously pushing away the Atlantic Ocean. The Atlantic was roused. Mrs. Partington's spirit was up; but I need not tell you that the contest was unequal. The Atlantic Ocean beat Mrs. Partington. She was excellent at a slop or a puddle, but she should not have meddled with a tempest. Gentlemen—be at your ease—be quiet and steady. You will beat Mrs. Partington."

Sydney Smith's Works, iii. 123.

The congregation of the Unions at Birmingham on the 7th of May composed the largest meeting believed to have been ever held in Great Britain. The numbers did not fall short of 150,000. The hustings were erected at the bottom of the slope of Newhall Hill, in a position so favourable that the voices of most of the speakers reached to the outskirts of the great assemblage, and to the throngs on the roofs of the surrounding houses. The Unions poured in upon the ground in one wide unbroken stream till the gazers were almost ready to ask one another whether this was not a convention of the nation itself. At the sound of the bugle from the hustings, silence was instantly produced; and Mr. Attwood, the Chairman, announced to the assemblage the object of the meeting;—to avow the unabated interest and resolute will of the people in the cause of Reform, and their determination to support their excellent King and his patriotic Ministers in carrying forward their great measure into law.—While the Chairman was speaking, the Bromsgrove Union, which arrived late, was seen approaching from afar. Their assembled brethren greeted them with the Union Hymn—deserving of record from being then familiar to every child in the land. It never was so sung before, nor after; for now, a hundred thousand voices pealed it forth in music which has never died away in the hearts of those who heard it. Seventy-four members of the Society of Friends—men of education, who had just joined the Union on principle—might now know something of the power of music. A different order of men, who could not be on the ground—some soldiers of the Scots Greys who had quietly joined the Union—must have listened from within their barracks with a longing to be on the hill. The Duke of Wellington was reckoning on their services to finish the business, after all: but the Hymn seems to tell that the warlike intentions were wholly on one side.

Newhall Hill Meeting. Spectator, 1832, p. 439.

UNION HYMN.

" Lo! we answer! see, we come,
Quick at Freedom's holy call.
We come! we come! we come! we come!
To do the glorious work of all:
And hark! we raise from sea to sea
The sacred watchword Liberty!

God is our guide! from field, from wave,
From plough, from anvil, and from loom,
We come, our country's rights to save,
And speak a tyrant faction's doom.
And hark! we raise from sea to sea
The sacred watchword Liberty!

God is our guide! no swords we draw,
We kindle not war's battle fires;
By union, justice, reason, law,
We claim the birthright of our sires.
We raise the watchword Liberty!
We will, we will, we will be free!"

Spirit-stirring as this was, a more solemn manifestation followed;—the Plighting of their Faith by these hundred thousand earnest men. "Here," said one of the speakers, Mr. Salt, "I call upon you to repeat, with head uncovered, and in the face of heaven and the God of justice and mercy, the following words after me." Every man bared his head, and, with the true Anglo-Saxon spirit swelling at his heart, uttered, slowly, one by one, as they were given forth, these words: "With unbroken faith, through every peril and privation, we here devote ourselves and our children to our country's cause."

On this same 7th of May, the Duke of Wellington was beginning to see how the hope of such multitudes as this was likely to be foiled, and relying confidently on the Scots Greys in their barracks for putting down this particular multitude, if it should prove troublesome. Mrs. Partington was going to her cupboard, to bring out her mop.—On this same 7th of May, the Lords, on reassembling after Easter, went immediately into Committee on the Bill; and, as their first act, overthrew the Administration. Before the echoes of the Hymn had well died away at Birmingham, before the tears were well dried which the Plighting of the Faith had brought upon many cheeks, the Lords in London had decided, by a majority of thirty-five against Ministers, and on the motion of Lord Lyndhurst, to postpone the disfranchising clauses, going first to the consideration of the new franchises. When Lord Grey moved to have the business stand over till the 10th, he was taunted with a desire to delay the Bill. Lord Ellenborough "could assure the noble earl and their lordships that, from the side of the House on which he sat, there was no wish whatever to interpose any delay to the adjustment of the measure." He went on to intimate that he was ready to proceed with a very large measure of Reform. As, however, he had given no notice of any reforming

Defeat of Ministers.
Hansard, xii. 724.

Hansard, xii. 728.

1832. intentions, and as the Ministers found themselves in a minority of thirty-five on the very first clause, Lord Grey persisted in asking for and obtaining an interval of three days.

Within those three days it became known that the division on the Monday night, the 7th, was the result of an intrigue which had been going on for many months. The King's personal intercourses had been throughout with some of the highest Conservatives in the country, rather than with his Ministers and their connexions. He was old, and very dependent on the ladies of his family: he was no statesman; and he had no knowledge of the mind and condition of the people, except through those who surrounded him. His wife, some of his daughters (the children of Mrs. Jordan), and his sisters, were opposed to the new measure, and were kept in constant alarm by their conservative friends; and they fed the King's mind with apprehensions which unfitted him for the discharge of his duty towards his Ministers and his people. Lord Wharncliffe, as representative of the anti-reforming lords, had engaged to Lord Grey at the beginning of the winter that the Bill should be carried through the second reading if no new peers were made; and accordingly the King was not asked to create peers. That the whole business was to be overthrown in Committee, and when, was certainly known in Edinburgh beforehand, when the Ministers themselves were in the dark as to what was likely to happen. Orders had also been issued from the Horse Guards for all the officers on furlough to join their regiments before this critical week; and every preparation that could be made by the Duke of Wellington for putting down risings of the people was made. During this week, orders were sent down to the barracks at Birmingham that the Scots Greys should be daily and nightly booted and saddled, with ball cartridge ready for use at a moment's notice. The Conservatives were determined that there should be a revolution rather than that the Reform Bill should pass.

Spectator, 1832, p. 429.

Spectator, 1832, p. 129.

Autobiography of a Working Man, p. 214.

The people were, however, too strong and too determined to render a revolution necessary. They were indignant on behalf of the ill-used Ministers; indignant at the weakness of the King; indignant at the meddling of the royal ladies; and in the last degree indignant at the intrigues of the Tory leaders: but they knew their strength to be so great that they had only to put it forth peaceably to subdue the adverse faction by a manifestation of will, instead of by force of arms. A nobler scene was never enacted by any nation than that of the nine days' waiting while the country was without a government.

On the morning of Tuesday, the 8th, a Cabinet Council was held, when it was determined to request from the King a creation of Peers sufficient to carry the Bill. The two highest officers of the realm, the Prime Minister and the Lord Chancellor, went to Windsor, to make this request. As none of the three persons present were likely to report what passed in this interview, it cannot be spoken of with any certainty: but a morning paper which professed to have information, declared that the King wept, and lamented that he must sacrifice his Ministers to his wife, his sisters, and his children. The Ministers tendered their resignations. On Wednesday morning, a special messenger brought a letter from the King, accepting the resignations of the Cabinet. The King came to town the same morning, to hold a levée;

Morning Chronicle.

RESIGNATION OF MINISTERS.

and he then formally received the resignations of the whole Administration, 1832.
with those of their friends in the Royal Household. The Whigs made a complete clearance, leaving not a single official, of any rank, about the King. They had done with the business; and they left a clear field for the anti-reformers. The Duke of Wellington afterwards spoke of his fruitless enterprise of the next nine days as an act of gallant devotedness, in which he was willing to sacrifice himself rather than desert his sovereign in an hour of perplexity and distress. It might be so: and the Duke might easily be too much feared, and too much respected, by the intriguers to be invited to their counsels: but the blame of the royal perplexity and distress should rest where it is due. It was not the King who was deceived and deserted, but his Ministers. The honour and fidelity were all on their side: and, if the Duke of Wellington went in to the rescue, it was on the appeal of a sovereign who had weakly deserted his faithful advisers and servants, and given himself into the hands of persons no less weak, who had brought him into a difficulty from which they could not rescue him. If he had refused to aid his sovereign, the Duke said, he "should have been ashamed to show his face in the streets." He Hansard, xii. 997.
endeavoured rather "to assist the King in the distressing circumstances in which he was placed;" meaning, however, by these "distressing circumstances," the advice of Lord Grey to create Peers, and not the position of humiliation, in regard to Lord Grey, in which a clique of helpless advisers had placed the sovereign. On the Wednesday evening, the Ministers announced to the two Houses their relinquishment of the government of the country; and on the Thursday, the Commons, on the motion of Lord Ebrington, addressed the Hansard, xii. 787.
King, deploring the retirement of the late administration, and imploring his ADDRESS OF THE COMMONS.
Majesty to take none for his advisers who would not carry the Reform measure unimpaired, and without delay. It was on this occasion that Mr. Baring declared himself "entirely ignorant of the cause which had led to the extraordinary resignation;" a statement which first occasioned loud laughter, and then called up Lord Althorp to make an explanation which was listened to in breathless silence, as he spoke with the calmest deliberation and the strongest emphasis. The moment he had uttered the words, there was "a burst of cheering, by far the most enthusiastic, universal, and long continued, Times Newspaper, May 11, 1832.
ever witnessed within the walls of parliament." Lord Althorp's words were, "I have no objection to state—that the advice which we thought it our duty Hansard, xii. 805.
to offer to his Majesty was, that he should create a number of peers sufficient to enable us to carry the Reform Bill through the other House of Parliament in an efficient form." The same advice was now tendered to the King by the Commons in the Address passed this night; and he did not feel himself at liberty to neglect it, even while placing himself in the hands of anti-reformers. "His Majesty insisted," declared the Duke of Wellington, a week later, "that some extensive measure of Reform (I use his Majesty's own words) Hansard, xii. 996.
should be carried." But the Duke was opposed to all Parliamentary Reform. What was to be done? The Duke proposed a compromise. He proposed to set aside the question of an "unconstitutional" creation of peers by granting a measure of Reform "moderate" enough to be passed by the Lords. He could not himself take office in any administration which would undertake even this: but he would rescue the Sovereign from his difficulties by making

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up a Cabinet for him—taking measures meantime for the safety of the country. Such was the extraordinary task which the great soldier undertook with the idea of serving his King and country: and very hard he worked to fulfil his duty. For five days he went about from door to door among his Tory friends: but from first to last, in vain. He had Lord Lyndhurst, the active spirit of the whole transaction, to help him: but there was no anti-reformer except Lord Lyndhurst who could be found to undertake to carry "a large measure of Reform;" and on the 15th, the Duke was compelled to announce to the King that all his attempted negotiations had failed.

Attempt to form a Cabinet.

Failure. Hansard, xii. 999.

During this interval, the nation was as busy as the Duke. As the news of the division on the night of the 7th spread through the country, men found themselves unable to give their minds to their affairs till the suspense should be relieved. The mail roads were sprinkled over for miles with people who were on the watch for news from London; and the passengers on the tops of the coaches shouted the tidings, or threw down handbills to tell that the Ministry had resigned. Then was there such mourning throughout England as had not been known for many years. Men forsook their business to meet and consult what they should do. In some places, the bells tolled: in others they were muffled. In many towns, black crape was hung over the signs of the King's Head: and there was talk of busts of Queen Adelaide being seen with a halter round the neck. These vain shows, however, did not suit the temper of earnest and efficient reformers, who did something better than mourn and threaten. While they went to their serious work, there was much for the mere observer to note and remember;—the full streets—for every body was abroad, from a desire for news, and because it was difficult to sit still at home;—the wistful faces of little children, who saw that something fearful was going on, but could not understand what;—and, above all, the close watching of the soldiery, wherever there were barracks; for the prevalent expectation now was, from the intimacy between the Duke of Wellington and the King, that a military control was to be attempted. It has since become certain that there were just grounds for this apprehension.

Agitation throughout the Country.

The Unions.

The Political Unions met early and continually. The National Union declared itself in permanent session: 1500 new members—all men of substance—entered it in one day. Its watchword was, "Peace, Order, Obedience to the Law." It passed a resolution, "That whoever advises a dissolution of parliament is a public enemy." As soon as the news reached Manchester, a petition to the House of Commons was prepared, praying the House to grant no Supply till the Bill was passed unimpaired: and this petition had received in four hours the signatures of 25,000 persons, and was despatched to London in the hands of three eminent citizens. This petition was the first of a large number which, within a few days, urged the same demand upon the House. The Bolton petition was signed by 20,300 within two or three hours. After reading the Manchester petition to the House, Mr. John Wood, who presented it, declared, "The whole of the north of England, the deputation from Manchester informed him, was in a state which it was impossible to describe. Dismay, and above all, indignation, prevailed every where. He believed, however, if the House did its duty, that the country might yet be saved: if it would not, he believed the people knew their duty; and if the House

Hansard, xii. 877.

Hansard, xii. 878.

would not stop the Supplies, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whoever he might be, would very soon find that his coffers were unreplenished. Whether such a line of conduct might be right or wrong, it was not for him to argue then; but it was his duty, as a Reformer, to state his firm conviction, that if a Borough-mongering faction should prevail, the people would take the most effectual mode of stopping the Supplies by telling the tax collector to call upon them when the Reform Bill had passed into a law." So much of this kind of statement was offered in the House, the petitions against votes of Supply were presented and received with such hearty concurrence, that it became a question every where what the Duke of Wellington and Lord Lyndhurst could possibly propose to do with the House of Commons. The present House would certainly never yield up the Reform measure; and if, as was reported and believed, the present parliament was to be immediately dissolved, there could be no doubt that the people would return an overwhelming majority of Reform members in the new elections.

LONDON MUNICIPALITY.

The Common Council of the City of London were among the petitioners to parliament to refuse the Supplies; they declared that all concerned in stopping the passage of the Reform Bill were enemies to their country; and they appointed a permanent committee, to sit from day to day, till the measure should be secured. The Livery of London, assembled in Common Hall, adopted exactly the same course. There can be no doubt that both bodies held themselves ready to communicate and co-operate with the political unions which were expected to march up to London, in case of a prolongation of the struggle. Some of the smaller unions discussed plans of marching peaceably to the metropolis, and bivouacking in the squares—there to wait till the Reform Bill should become law. The great Birmingham Union, now 200,000 strong, was to encamp on Hampstead Heath, or perhaps Penenden Heath, in order to incorporate with it bodies coming from the south. On the movements of this Birmingham Union, which had so lately uttered its sublime vow under the open sky, all eyes were now turned: and there is reason to believe that what passed at Birmingham immediately determined the issue of this mighty contention.

Annual Register, 1832, p. 170.

SOLDIERY AND POLICE.

Declarations began to appear in the Tory newspapers that all reports of the disaffection of the Scots Greys at Birmingham were mere fabrications of the Reformers; and that it was a gross and scandalous falsehood that the Duke of Wellington could not rely upon the soldiery. These declarations immediately showed men that such things had been said, and that the reports were considered of importance; and most people believed that they were true. Revelations have since been made which show that there was much truth in them. There had been talk of "cold iron" on the Tory side, for some days; and the Duke of Wellington had been understood to stand pledged since the 9th, "to quiet the country in ten days;" and an attempt at military government for the time was almost universally looked for. What the Duke's intentions were precisely is not known, and perhaps it will never be known; but circumstances have been revealed which show that his reliance at first was more or less on the soldiery; and that he was informed of the vain nature of his reliance immediately before he gave up his enterprise. The earliest hours of his negotiation were employed in sending out feelers of the disposition of the new police; and Colonel Rowan's report was unsatisfactory. From two of the divisions the

Spectator, 1832, p. 442.

1832.

answer was, that if it was intended for the police to act against the people, they could not be relied on. There were some among the soldiery who reported of themselves to the same effect with the least possible delay, not even waiting to be questioned; and from a passage in a speech of a relative of the Duke of Wellington's on the 16th, it appears that the disinclination to oppose the people was concluded to be prevalent in the army. In the last preceding struggle, in October, the Duke of Wellington had said to Mr. Potter, of Manchester, who represented the determination of the working classes to have Reform, "the people of England are very quiet if they are left alone; and if they won't, there is a way to make them." In the opinion of his relative, Mr. Wellesley, member for Essex, he was now, on the 16th of May, finding himself mistaken. Mr. Wellesley "was sorry he had shown so much ignorance of the character of the British people, in supposing that they were not fit to be trusted with those liberties to which we, as Reformers, say they are worthily entitled. He had told him so often; and he was astonished that a man of such intelligent mind—a man who had led them on through blood and battle, through danger to victory—should have so mistaken the character of the British people, as to suppose that the red coat could change the character of the man, or to imagine that the soldier was not a citizen." Some of the yeomanry corps resigned during the critical interval; that of Ware being in such haste to declare themselves on the side of the people, that they assembled immediately on hearing of the retirement of the Whig ministry, and informed the Marquess of Salisbury of their resignations by sending them at midnight to Hatfield House. Of all the forces in the kingdom, the soldiery at Birmingham fixed the most attention, because Birmingham was the foremost place in public observation; because the Duke must be able to rely on the soldiery stationed there at such a time, if on any; and because of the reports afloat that the Scots Greys would refuse to act against the people, if called upon.

Spectator, 1832, p. 462.

Spectator, 1832, p. 462.

The officers of the Birmingham Union knew that certain of the Scots Greys were on the Union books. Letters were found in the streets of the town, which declared in temperate language that the Greys would do their duty if called on to repress riot, or any kind of outrage, but that they would not act if called on to put down a peaceable public meeting, or to hinder the conveyance to London of any petition, by any number of peaceable persons. Some of these letters contained the strongest entreaties to the people of Birmingham to keep the peace, that they might not compel their sympathizing friends among the Greys to act against them. Letters containing similar avowals were sent to the King, to the Duke of Wellington, and to Lord Hill at the War Office. We know this on the testimony of a private of the regiment, who avows himself a party in these proceedings, and who gives us the following clear and impressive account of his own view of the position in which he and his comrades stood; a view which he knew to be shared by many of his comrades, and which he took care should be well understood by the Duke of Wellington: "The duty of soldiers to protect property and suppress riots expressed then were the opinions which I have since expressed. To write, or say, or think, that in any case we were not to do what we were ordered was a grave offence, nothing short of mutiny. I was aware of that grave fact. I remonstrated with the soldiers who had joined the Political

Autobiography of a Working Man, p. 246.

Autobiography of a Working Man, p. 249.

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Union, and succeeded in persuading them to recall their adhesion to it. With the same regard to my own safety, I never went near the Political Union. Had the time and the circumstances come for us to act according to our design and judgment, and not according to orders, it would have been an occasion great enough to risk all that we were risking. It would have been a national necessity. We would have either been shot dead, or triumphant with a nation's thanks upon our heads. For either alternative we were prepared." This state of preparation being made known at head-quarters on the one hand, and by the whole people of Birmingham and the Midland Counties through the newspapers on the other, all plans of military coercion in that neighbourhood were clearly frustrated.

The first probation of these soldiers was on the Sunday after the Newhall Hill meeting. At all times hitherto the barrack yard had been the resort of people who liked "to see the Greys:" and on the preceding Sunday, "there were upwards of 5,000 people within the gates, most of them well dressed artisans, all wearing ribbons of light blue knotted in their breasts, indicating that they were members of the political union." On the next Sunday, the scene was different indeed. The gates were closed; the soldiers were marched to prayers in the forenoon, and their occupation for the rest of the day was rough-sharpening their swords on the grindstone. This was at the time that they were kept supplied with ball cartridge, and booted and saddled day and night. They were kept so close within their walls at present, that they did not know with any precision what was going forward: but their impression was—and the impression soon became a rumour—that the Birmingham Union was to march for London that night, and that the Greys were to bar its progress. The doubt and dread were not lessened by the nature of their work. The purpose of rough-sharpening the swords "was to make them inflict a ragged wound. Not since before the battle of Waterloo had the swords of the Greys undergone the same process. Old soldiers spoke of it, and told the young ones. Few words were spoken. We had made more noise, and probably looked less solemn, at prayers in the morning, than we did now grinding our swords. It was the Lord's day, and we were *working*."

Autobiography of a Working Man, p. 244.

The Union did not start for London that night. It had to hold a meeting the next day. There were then 200,000 persons present. They resolved to pay no taxes till the Bill was passed; and they carried a Declaration of unappeasable opposition to the faction which had misled the King, and of reasons why the nation should demand the removal of the Duke of Wellington from the royal counsels. This declaration was to have been signed (after legal revision) by all the Unionists in the kingdom: but it was not wanted—any more than the jagged swords of the Greys. The Birmingham Union met again on the Wednesday for purposes of thanksgiving.

Spectator, 1832, p. 462.

The debating of the newspapers, and of all assemblages of people, in public and private, as to whether it was or was not true that the army was not to be relied on, was fatal to all reliance on the army, and would have been, if every soldier in the kingdom had been precisely of the Duke's way of thinking. It must have been an extreme surprise to the great Captain to find already that if the people would not be quiet, there was *not* a way to make them so against their will. So it proved, however; and the end of it was that if the Duke

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Lord Grey recalled.

Hansard, xii. 982, 989.

would not be quiet, the people had found a way to make him so. On the second day after the grinding of swords—on Tuesday, the 15th—Lords Grey and Althorp intimated to the two Houses the joyful news that communications were renewed between the sovereign and themselves which rendered it expedient to adjourn till Thursday. The words were scarcely uttered before there was a rush from the Houses, to spread the tidings. There was no electric telegraph then: but the news flew as by electric agency. By breakfast time the next morning, placards were up in the streets of Birmingham; and presently the people thronged to Newhall Hill, after bringing Mr. Attwood into the town. As by an impulse of the moment, a minister present was asked to offer thanksgiving; and that prayer—that devout expression of gratitude for their bloodless victory, and their privileges as exulting freemen, was felt by the throng to be a fitting sequel to their last week's solemn vow.

Spectator, 1832, p. 465.

It must be some days before the facts could become perfectly known, or the future certainly anticipated: but men felt secure enough of the result to begin to return to their business. There had been a run on the Bank of England to the extent of above £1,000,000 in small sums. Now, this began to flow back again: the weaver stepped into his loom: the blacksmith blew up the fire of his forge: the husbandmen parted off into the fields; and the merchants of London ceased to crowd the footways of Lombard-street all day long.

Life of Lord Eldon, iii. 178.

King's Appeal to the Peers.

In forty-eight hours more there was a rumour in London that by some means unknown the peers had been induced to yield. What the conjuration was which brought about such a marvel was not understood at present; except that some unusual exertion of his personal influence had been made by the King. That the good behaviour of the peers was not absolutely assured seemed to be shown by the care with which Lord Grey and his colleagues evaded the question whether they had received any pledge about a creation of peers. By acute observers it was supposed that some method of warning or persuasion had been used by the King: and that he held himself ready, in case of its failure, to create peers, to the extent necessary for carrying the Bill. This proved to be the truth. The first expedient was successful: and it is entertaining now to see, on looking back to that date, how credit is taken by the Lords who now yielded to this final appeal for having "saved the Peerage, with what else was left of the Constitution." The final appeal to the Lords—the last practical acknowledgment of their free will, was in the form of the following circular letter, dated from St. James's Palace, May 17th, 1832:—

Annual Register, 1832, p. 187.

"My dear Lord,—I am honoured with his Majesty's commands to acquaint your lordship, that all difficulties to the arrangements in progress will be obviated by a declaration in the House to-night from a sufficient number of peers, that, in consequence of the present state of affairs, they have come to the resolution of dropping their further opposition to the Reform Bill, so that it may pass without delay, and as nearly as possible in its present shape. I have the honour, &c. Herbert Taylor."

This, which was called the King's letter to the waverers, removed all difficulties. It was dated on the Thursday; and on that night the Duke of Wellington made his explanation of the transactions of the preceding week, retiring from the House when he had finished, and absenting himself during all the

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PROGRESS OF THE BILL.

remaining discussions of the Reform Bill. About 100 peers went out with him, and absented themselves in like manner. On the next Monday, the 21st, the peers resumed the discussion of the Bill in committee—the Duke of Newcastle protesting against their assuming such an appearance of free will as this, and desiring that they would read through the whole Bill at once, and pass it as quickly as possible—as men acting under open compulsion. The first division took place the next night, on the question of the separate representation of the Tower Hamlets, when the anti-reformers exhibited their largest minority—36 to 91. But this disheartened them; and on the next night only 15 were present. On Thursday, the 24th, 23 were present. On Wednesday, the 30th, the disfranchising sections of the Bill were gone through—the tenderest points where all was painful. These sections were read through with little discussion, and no real opposition; and on the same night the Committee finished its business. On the 1st of June the Report was received, eighteen peers recording their dissent in a protest. On the 4th, Lord Grey was ill; but he went down to the House to move the third reading of his Bill. Unfit for exertion as he was, he was called up by an attack on the Administration from Lord Harrowby. When he sat down, it was suddenly, from inability to stand and speak; but his last words on Parliamentary Reform, though not designed to be the last, were a fitting close to the testimony of his whole political life: "He trusted that those who augured unfavourably of the Bill would live to see all their ominous forebodings falsified, and that, after the angry feelings of the day had passed away, the measure would be found to be, in the best sense of the word, conservative of the Constitution." The majority were 106; the minority 22. The question 'that the Bill do pass' was put and carried; and then a great number of congratulating peers gathered about the venerable Minister who had so majestically conducted to fruition a measure which he had advocated before many of the existing generation of legislators were born, and through long years of discouragement, which ordinary men would have taken for hopelessness. The Commons next day agreed to the few amendments proposed by the Lords, which left untouched the disfranchising and enfranchising clauses; and on Thursday, June 7th, the Reform Bill became law—the Royal assent being given by a commission consisting of the Lord Chancellor, the Marquesses of Lansdowne and Wellesley, and Lords Grey, Holland, and Durham.

Hansard, xiii. 368.

Hansard, xiii. 374.

ITS PASSAGE INTO LAW.

Spectator, 1832, p. 529.

It is not to be supposed that when Lord Grey received the congratulations of his friends, there was no melancholy mingled with his satisfaction; or that he had no sympathy with the stoutest of his opponents. The provocation caused by the long resistance of the Peers to a necessary change might naturally blind the people at large to a portion of their case, and might urge the most lordly of the Ministers themselves into a state of popular feeling at which they might afterwards stand surprised. But Lord Grey was too much of a man, too much of a scholar, too much of a peer, not to feel and remember that, by the passage of this Act, the ancient glory of the House of his Order was declared to have departed. The change could not be prevented. It was rendered so imperative by time that the course of wisdom was clear—to acquiesce in the change, and to obtain the utmost possible good out of the attendant circumstances. But, however anxious to put an end to the abuses

POSITION OF THE HOUSE OF LORDS.

1832. of borough corruption and the interference of peers with popular representation, such a man as Lord Grey could not but remember the ancient days when the lords of the realm were the parliament of the realm—when there was no middle class, and the peers were the protectors of such popular interests as existed then;—he could not but remember the majesty of his House during the centuries when the popular element was advancing and expanding; and though that House had of late fallen from its dignity—become adulterated in its quality, and disgraced by too much of ignorance and sordidness in its self-will and its claims—it still was the British House of Peers which was now overborne and humbled, and made conscious that it existed no longer as a vital part of the English Constitution, but for the sake of decorum and expediency. It was natural for the people—the large majority of whom contemplate the present and the future in all their interests—to enjoy the signal proof now given of the continuous rise and expansion of the popular element in the nation; but the most that could be expected from Lord Grey was to perceive and provide for the fact in the noblest and the amplest manner. His associations were too much concerned with the past to admit of his rejoicing with an unmingled joy. Many of us who rejoiced without drawback at the time, and held the strongest opinions of the folly and selfishness of the Tory peers, can now see that they really were much to be pitied: that it was true that "the balance of the Constitution was destroyed;" and that the change was something audacious and unheard of. In as far as these things were true, the Conservative Peers had a claim to the sympathy of all thoughtful persons in their regrets. Their fault and folly lay—that fault and folly which deprived them of popular sympathy—in supposing that the operations of time could be resisted, and their own position maintained, by a mere refusal to give way. They lost more than they need have done by a foolish and ungracious resistance, which served but to complete and to proclaim their humiliation. It is a fact not to be denied, that, as the kingly power had before descended to a seat lower than that of parliament, the House of Peers now took rank in the government below the Commons. It will ever stand in history that the House of Commons became the true governing power in Great Britain in 1832, and that from that date the other powers existed, not by their own strength, but by a general agreement founded on considerations as well of broad utility, as of decorum and ancient affection. In as far as the House of Peers was now proved to be destined henceforward (as the Royal function had for some time been) to exist only by consent of the people at large, it might be truly said that the Constitution was destroyed; and the Prime Minister who had conducted the process could not be insensible, even in the moment of his triumph, to the seriousness and antiquarian melancholy of the fact, however convinced he might be of the historical glories which were to arise out of it.

By the Reform Bill, as passed, the representative system of the British Islands became this. Polit. Dict. i. 585.

Substance of the Reform Bill.

In England, the county constituencies, which had before been fifty-two, returning ninety-four members, were now increased by the division of counties to eighty-two constituencies, returning 159 members. In Ireland there was no change. In Scotland, the number of constituencies and members remained as before, but some shifting took place to secure a more equitable representa-

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tion. The great increase in the county representation is the chief of those features which would soon cause the measure to be called (as Lords Grey and Althorp predicted) "the most aristocratic measure that ever passed the House of Commons."

All boroughs whose population was, according to the census of 1831, under 2000 were disfranchised. Fifty-six English boroughs, which before returned 111 members, were thus extinguished as constituencies. Such boroughs as had a population under 4000, and had hitherto returned two representatives, were now to have one. These being thirty in number, thirty members were thus reduced. The united boroughs of Weymouth and Melcombe Regis were now to send two members instead of four: and thus was the total reduction of 143 old borough members provided for.

As the total number of representatives was not to be altered (as decided by the House of Commons), the 143 were to be distributed over new or newly-arranged constituencies. New and large constituencies in England and Wales received 63. The Metropolitan districts and other boroughs with a population of 25,000 and upwards were now to return two members each; and these took up 22 more. The remaining 21 were to be returned by 21 boroughs whose population amounted to 12,000 and upwards. In Ireland, the increase of the representation was only from 35 to 39 members; with an additional member given to Dublin University. In Scotland, there was much redistribution of the franchise, and change in the formation of constituencies: and the number of town representatives was raised from 15 to 23.

There was much changing of boundaries where a population had grown up outside the old limits, and fixing of limits to the boroughs which had a large new population.

Improvements were made in the practice of issuing writs for new elections, and in the conduct of elections, by the ordaining of convenient polling districts, and the shortening of the time of polling in contested elections. The term of fifteen polling days in county elections was shortened to two in England, Wales, and Scotland, and five in Ireland: and instead of the old process of scrutiny, which occasioned endless delays and vexations, there was to be henceforward only a comparison of the voter's statement as to name and qualification with his description in the register.

In the great matter of the qualification of voters it was thought impossible to avoid compromise; and some provisions therefore exist which every body understands must be got rid of sooner or later. The old "freemen" were permitted to remain among the qualified, the condition of residence being imposed, and all being excluded who had been made freemen since March 1831, the fact being notorious that a multitude of such voters had been created by the corporations, for the sake of defeating the Reform measure. The new borough franchise rested on the basis of inhabitancy. Inhabitants of abodes (whose various kinds are specified) of the yearly value of 10*l.*, become electors, provided they comply with all conditions of registration, payment of rates and taxes, and length of residence. The privileges of out-voters were abolished entirely, the elector being able to vote only in the place where he resides, or where he has property in land or houses of the required amount. In Ireland great changes were occasioned by this fixing of the franchise, as the

1832. corporations there had been excessively corrupt in the use of the large powers of which they were now deprived. In Scotland, the franchise was at once, and for the first time, put into the hands of the true constituency, while the town councils were deprived of the powers which they had grossly abused.

As for the county franchise—it was extended by admitting copyholders and leaseholders, and even, under some circumstances, occupiers, to the franchise which was before confined to freeholders, to the value of 40*s.*; while freeholders were prevented from voting in both county and borough elections. The most unfortunate part of the Bill was that clause proposed by the Marquess of Chandos, by which tenants-at-will in the counties, occupying at a yearly value of 50*l.*, have the franchise. By this provision, the power of the great landed proprietors over their tenantry is perpetuated; and hence arises a greater frustration of the purposes of the Act than from all other errors and faults together. The county franchise in Ireland was so resettled in 1829 as to be little affected by the present Act, such alteration as there was being the admission of certain copyholders, leaseholders, and occupiers. By the new arrangements, the county constituency in Scotland was much enlarged.

As for the qualification of the representative, disabilities on account of profession (as the clerical), and the holding of modern offices under the crown, and of situations of government emolument, remained much as before. Disabilities on account of religious opinion had been already almost entirely abrogated. The qualification for an English, Welsh, and Irish member remained as before in regard to property; viz., a clear estate of 600*l.* a year for a county seat, and of 300*l.* a year for a city or borough seat. The property qualifications were not extended to Scotland at the time of the Union; nor were they by the new Act. A qualification was formerly required for a Scottish elector which is not necessary for a Scottish representative now.

What the Bill is, and is not.

Such was the Reform Act of 1832, by which the landed interests were brought down some little way from a supremacy which had once been natural and just, but which had now become insufferably tyrannical and corrupt. As the manufacturing and commercial classes had long been rising in numbers, property, and enlightenment, it was time for them to be obtaining a proportionate influence in the government. By this Act they did not obtain their due influence: but they gained much; and the way was cleared for more. Great as was the gain thus far, there was a yet mightier benefit in the proof that the will of the People, when sufficiently intelligent and united, could avail to modify the government through the forces of reason and resolution, without violence. This point ascertained, and the benefit secured, all subsided into quiet. Trade and manufactures began immediately to prosper; credit was firm, and the majority of the nation were in high hope of what might be expected from a government which had begun its reforms so nobly, and promised many more. There were some, and not a very few, who declared that the sun of England had set for ever: but yet nobody could see that it was growing dark. Men in general thought that if they had ever walked in broad daylight, it was now.

State of Public Interests.

The King.

The King was presently pitied and pardoned, as an old man, called late to the throne—more amiable than enlightened, and entangled between public duty and private affections which had been brought by the fault of others into

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contrariety: but, as was fitting, he never recovered his original popularity. When the Reform Bill was once secure, men no more carried a black flag, with the inscription, "Put not your trust in princes;" nor a crown stuffed with straw, with the inscription "Ichabod;" but neither did they rend the clouds again with cheers for their "King William, the father of his country." There was no longer any thing to fear from him: but men saw that neither was there any thing to hope from him: and he was thenceforth treated with a mere decorum, which had in it full as much of compassion as of respect.

THE ADMINISTRATION.

As for his Ministers, they were idols, aloft in a shrine.

CHAPTER VI.

1832.

Aspects of the Time.

WHILE the Reform Bill was in progress and in jeopardy, little else was thought of—except, indeed, the new plague which had come to overcloud all hearts, and to attract to itself some of the terror which would otherwise have been given entire to the apprehension of coming revolution. There were many in those days who would have been intensely grateful to know, first, that the Cholera would have departed by a certain day, leaving them and their families in safety: and next, that revolution—by which they understood the overthrow of the whole social fabric—would not happen in their life time. If they could have been assured of these two immunities, they would have been quite happy, would have believed their way was clear for life, and that affairs would remain in their existing state, as long as their own generation had any concern with them. Very different from this view was that taken by braver spirits, with that truer vision given by courage and enlightenment. Life, i. 294. "The truth is," wrote Dr. Arnold, in April 1831, "that we are arrived at one of those periods in the progress of society when the constitution naturally undergoes a change, just as it did two centuries ago. It was impossible then for the King to keep down the higher part of the middle classes; it is impossible now to keep down the middle and lower parts of them. . . . One would think that people who talk against change were literally as well as metaphorically blind, and really did not see that every thing in themselves and around them is changing every hour by the necessary laws of its being."—"There is Life, i. 281. nothing so revolutionary, because there is nothing so unnatural and so convulsive to society, as the strain to keep things fixed, when all the world is by the very law of its creation in eternal progress; and the cause of all the evils of the world may be traced to that natural but most deadly error of human indolence and corruption, that our business is to preserve and not to improve."

Such was the view taken, and maintained at first with some consistency, by the Ministry which came into power in November, 1830. They saw that a new period had arrived, from which great changes must take their date. They saw what opposition would be raised by those who feared change; and what difficulties by a host of sufferers from existing evils, or unreasonable Works, iii. 133. expectants of impossible good. They could laugh when Sydney Smith said, in a speech on the Reform Bill, "All young ladies will imagine, as soon as this Bill is carried, that they will be instantly married. Schoolboys believe that gerunds and supines will be abolished, and that currant tarts must ultimately come down in price; the corporal and sergeant are sure of double pay; bad poets will expect a demand for their epics; fools will be disappointed, as they always are:"—Ministers might laugh at the expectations of the fools and school-children; but they were aware that a multitude of evils which must be redressed now and obviated for the future must be dealt with in another manner than the sufferers themselves had any idea of, or were at all likely to approve. Not only had they to carry through some arduous work in which they were supported by the demand and the sympathy of a majority of the nation: they had also much to do which was not less imperatively demanded; but in doing which they must adopt methods which their supporters had to be taught to understand.—To appreciate their position, irrespective of the Reform Bill, let us briefly survey the state and prospects of the country when Lord Grey and his friends came into power.

The Cholera.

The much-dreaded Cholera proved the smallest of the prominent evils of the time. Its first assault was the most violent; and then it attacked few but the vicious, the diseased, and the feeble; and it carried off in the whole fewer victims than many an epidemic, before and since, which has run its course very quietly. Before its disappearance from the United Kingdom, in fifteen months, the average of deaths was one in 3¼ of those attacked: and the total number of deaths in and near London was declared to be 5,275. No return was obtained of the number in the kingdom. When it is remembered how many deaths happened in the noisome places of our towns, and in damp nooks of wretched country villages; and in the pauper haunts of Edinburgh and Glasgow, and among the hungering Irish, it is clear that the disease could hardly work any appreciable effect in the open places, and among the comfortable classes of the kingdom. If a person of rank, or substance, or in healthy middle age, was attacked here and there, it was spoken of as a remarkable circumstance; and the Cholera soon came to be regarded as a visitation on the vicious and the poor. Happily the preparations which depended on the apprehensions or the benevolence of the rich were made before that change in the aspect of the new plague;—the cleansing and white-washing—the gifts of clothing and food: and the impression was made on all thoughtful minds that improved knowledge and care on the subject of health were the cause of our comparative impunity under the visitation of this plague, and that a still improved knowledge and care were the requisites to a complete impunity hereafter. Though our progress from that day to this has been slower than it ought to have been, the awakening of society in England to the duty of care of the Public Health must date from the visitation of the Cholera in 1831-2.

Cholera Return, 1832.

The state of the rural districts was fearful at the time of the accession of the Grey administration. Every body knew about the rick-burning and machine-breaking; and the thoughtless and narrow-minded called for soldiery and police, stringent laws and severe punishments. More thoughtful persons, however, looked also at the condition of the agricultural interest generally—the complaints of distress, renewed from year to year, the increase of pauperism and poor rates, and the growth of crime, as well as of misery; and they saw that the evil was one which stringent laws and severe punishments could not cure, nor even reach. They saw that the real mischief lay in the antiquated and corrupted Poor-law which they knew to be what it was declared to be by a French commission sent over to inquire into its operation—"the great political gangrene of England, which it was equally dangerous to meddle with and to let alone." Under this system, in its union with the Corn Laws, the condition and prospects of the country were truly such as to make sagacious

The Poor Law.

1832. statesmen tremble. No previous administration had understood the mischief in all its extent and its bearings; but the facts were that while rents were nominally very high, no landowner was sure of his income; that the farmers were subject to fluctuations in their receipts which discouraged all prudence and self-education for their business; that land was badly tilled, or actually going out of cultivation; that the quality of labour was deteriorating incessantly, from the practice of paying wages more and more out of the rates; that the labourers were becoming more and more reckless and demoralized, as they came to form a huge pauper class; that the honest and independent of their order were drawn down faster and faster into pauperism; that the class of small shopkeepers were becoming, in increasing numbers, unable to pay rates, and compelled, instead, to apply for relief; that country parishes were exhibiting themselves, with less and less shame, as scenes of unprincipled jobbing and scandalous vice, where every one who could thrust his hand into the public purse, where the honest and independent became the victims of the knavish and reckless, where the unchaste might prosper while the chaste must starve, where the capitalists of the parish must sink under the coalition between the magistracy and the paupers; and where ruin impended over all. The amount of money expended for the relief of the poor in England and Wales had risen in half a century from under two millions to above seven millions per annum: and this vast expenditure went to increase instead of to relieve the pauperism of the country. Here was this enormous tax, becoming ruinous by annual increase, less production from the land, less industry among the labourers, more vice, more misery, a great race of illegitimate children growing up, riots by day, fires by night, the stout heart of England sinking, and likely to be soon broken; and all from the existence of a Poor-law system for whose repeal or alteration there was no popular demand, while it was certain that every item of it would be clutched fast to the last moment by parties and persons the most difficult to deal with from their lack of either enlightenment or public principle. Next to the Reform question, the gravest which presented itself to the handling of the new Ministry was undoubtedly that of the Poor Law.

If it was proposed to lighten the pressure upon the poor-rate by the resource of Emigration, the question was, how was it to be done?—where were the people to go? The true principles of colonization were on the eve of being announced; but they were not yet understood; and there was the story of the Swan River settlement, new and disheartening, within every man's knowledge. The Swan River settlement dates from 1829 as a British colony. The accounts given of the district (on the western coast of New Holland) by Captain Stirling, who became its first governor, caused the grandest expectations. And the fault of the failure did not lie in any deception about the natural advantages of the place. The fault was in ignorance of the first principles of colonization. Vast tracts of land were sold or granted to individuals. The colony was to be exempted, as a favour, from any importation of convicts. The settlers were to be allowed 200 acres of land for every labouring man, woman, or child above ten years of age, that they should import into the colony: and forty acres of land were given (up to the end of 1830) for every amount of £3 imported into the settlement in any shape. Thus land

Swan River Settlement.

superabounded in proportion to capital: and the capital brought in, though so scanty in proportion to the land, abounded in proportion to the labour. The richest of the colonists could obtain no labourers; and they sat down upon their lands, surrounded by their rotting goods, their useless tools, and the frames of houses which there were no hands to erect—without shelter, and certain soon to be without food, if more labour could not be obtained. Instead of more, there was daily less, as the few labourers who were on the spot made use of their first exorbitant earnings to possess themselves of enough of the cheap land to make them their own masters. Now it appeared that the secret of the success of other settlements, pitied for their liability to convict immigration, was in their convict labour: and the Swan River colonists petitioned the government at home to send them convicts to save them from destruction. Some of the settlers wandered away, as they could find opportunity, to other colonies, stript of every thing, or carrying the mere wrecks of their expensive outfit, and declaring of the famous Swan River district, "it is a country to break one's heart:" and people at home heard such tales of perplexity and disaster as shook the popular confidence in Emigration as a resource, and might well make the government hesitate in regarding it as a remedy, in any degree, for the intolerable pressure upon the poor-rate.

Slavery.

And what was the state of older colonies? The moral sense of the nation must be met in regard to the abolition of Slavery. From the time of the issue of the famous Circular in Canning's day—from the time that the cause of the negro had been taken up by the powers at home—it was certain that a radical change must take place in the relation between the proprietors of men and their legal human property: and none who saw what a vast universe of morals lies above and beyond the range of the law, could for a moment doubt what that change would be. But there were enough of men, as there are in every community, who see nothing above and beyond the existing law, to make the process of change appear in anticipation very difficult and hazardous. Those interested in human proprietorship would perhaps no longer try to push Clarkson into the dock at Liverpool, or even dare to murder missionaries at such a distance as Demerara: but they had to be reminded that laws could be altered or abolished, and taught that eternal principles exist which compel the destruction of bad laws: and unwilling pupils like these are very slow at learning their lesson. This mighty work, of the abolition of Slavery, lay clear before the eyes of the Ministers, needing to be done, and soon. Another colony in the West—Canada—was in an unsatisfactory state: but the call for reform there appeared to be less pressing than it really was: and no adequate attention was given to it for yet a few years. As for our great Indian dependencies, there was no option about attending to them and their needs, for the Company's charter was about to expire: but it was a question of mighty importance to future ages, as well as of vital consequence to many millions of living men, what the terms of the great East India proprietorship or administration should be from this time forward: whether the new doctrine of commercial freedom should spread to the nations of the East by our practice of it there, or whether any of the time-hallowed monopolies of the most majestic of Merchant Companies should be contended for against the rising popular will.

Canada.

India.

Nearer home, there was that difficulty, without limit as to depth and extent,

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Irish Church.

Tithes.

Law Reform.

Education.

the state of Ireland. The form in which the spirit of outrage now showed itself was opposition to the Church. It had become impossible to collect tithe in Ireland; and men saw that to collect tithe in Ireland would never be possible again. Here was the insulted Church to be vindicated (for there was as yet no debate whether to maintain it), and, at all events, the starving Irish clergy to be succoured, many of whom had pawned or sold their furniture and clothes, and were working like labourers to raise potatoes to feed their children, or were thankful for the gift of a meal of porridge for their families from a neighbour. In England too, in places where the clergymen were strict about their dues, an imitation of Irish methods of dealing with tithe-collectors began to be heard of; and the affair was becoming urgent. Chancery reform, and many improvements in our judicial system besides were needed and demanded. The severity of our Criminal Law had been for many years condemned; and one relaxation after another had been procured: but much more remained to be done than had yet been effected. The infliction of punishment was still perniciously uncertain, from the law ordaining severer penalties than the tribunals chose to inflict; and a complete revision of the Criminal Law, in order to bring it into harmony with the spirit of a new age, was a great work pressing to be done. There was another noble task—new, beneficent, but not on that account the less urgently necessary—for which the nation looked confidently to the new administration, and especially to the Henry Brougham who was so deeply pledged to the cause:—the work of preparing a National System of Education lay before the new rulers. The struggle and success of the people in the Reform question was a plea for it: the growing evils of the Poor-law system were a plea for it:—the hope of the operative classes, and the despair of the rick-burners and the machine-breakers, were pleas for it. But these pleas, and all others, were in vain. It was not that Henry Brougham, during his four years of power, made efforts which were defeated, as efforts on behalf of Education have been since, by sectarian or other differences: it was not here that the disappointment lay; but in Henry Brougham never approaching the subject at all, during his four years of power. This affair lay before the new administration, when they came into office, with the others just enumerated; and it was the greatest of them all. It alone was left untouched, and must be omitted in the narrative of what was done between 1830 and 1834.

Bank.

There was, besides, the Currency question, sure to turn up, under all administrations, with every vicissitude of the national fortunes; and now more sure than usual, from the approaching expiration of the Bank Charter. There was the usual eagerness every where for the reduction of taxation; and more than the usual expectation, from the confidence felt that a reforming ministry would deal freely with sinecure offices and pensions which a Tory government could not be expected to touch.

Municipal Reform.

The opportunity must be taken while the spirit of reform pervaded the nation, and the enlightened will of the middle classes was in its completest union and vigour, to reform the municipal institutions of the country. A liberal cabinet, anxious to raise the national mind and character by an extension of self-government, could not but know that it was as desirable to purify and enlarge municipal administration and powers as to amend the parliamentary representation. And this work, which would have been necessary if they had had nothing else to do than to carry Parliamentary and Corporation Reform, was made yet more indispensable in their eyes by the necessity which they foresaw of introducing a principle and practice of centralization, new to administration in England, and requiring, not only a careful watch over itself, but a set-off of enlarged local powers in some other direction. They foresaw that the perplexing and overwhelming task of Poor-law reform could be accomplished no otherwise than by taking out of the hands of local administrators the powers which had been so long and so grossly abused, that the wisest and best individuals could not be the reformers of the system in their own neighbourhoods, but only its victims. These powers must now be confided to some central body, and by them locally administered. Whether this necessity was a good or an evil one might be and was debated by the two orders of politicians by whom the great question of centralization and local administration is for ever debated; but, while some insisted that business was much better done when done for the people by well-trained officials, sending out their functionaries from a central office, and others contended that no such advantages could compensate for the loss to the people of the habit and the privilege of managing their local affairs for themselves, the new government felt that a municipal reform which should enlarge the local powers and public interests of the people would be the best safeguard they could give against the possible evils of such centralization as they must establish in the prosecution of some other indispensable reforms.

Such was the series of works which lay before the new Ministry, when they should have accomplished their distinguishing achievement of Parliamentary Reform. The mere list is an indication that we have arrived at a new period of history, and that our method of narration must change accordingly. Hitherto, while governments went on from year to year, legislating for the time—adding, amending, abrogating, from session to session, as natural occasion arose—our history could not but take something of the form of the Chronicle—as it will again before its close. But at the incoming of a new period, so marked by a great act of regeneration or revolution—whichever it may be called—the chronicle method can do no justice to the matter to be conveyed. The story of the Reform Bill could not be fitly told but in regular sequence: neither can the story of the other reforms which it held in intimate relation. We have catalogued the ordinary stars as they set: but now that a magnificent new constellation appears in our political firmament, we must do something more than name the stars and let them go down in the list. They must be signalized, so that all may know what has arisen. The story of these enterprises will therefore be given in sequence, after a glance at the condition of the new Administration in regard to its powers and its impediments.

STRENGTH OF THE GOVERNMENT.

Lord Grey's administration was strong in political character. All its members had been not only liberal while in Opposition, but consistent for a long course of years in contending for the precise objects which they now came into power for the purpose of achieving. They were strong in the popular support from the beginning: this strength went on increasing during the two years occupied by the Reform struggle, and the meeting of the first reformed parliament: but it must, as every member of the government could not but

1832. know, end in weakness. The enthusiasm with which ministers were regarded in 1832 could not last. From the nature of the human mind, it must subside: and, when idolatry has once begun to decline, it is certain that the idol will soon be found to be clay. Lord Brougham was ridiculed for saying, after the meeting of the first reformed parliament, that the government was too strong. Whatever was the sense in which he meant this, the event proved that it would have been better for the government not to have had so overwhelming a majority as they could number. A patriotic minister wishes to have as strong an opposition as is consistent with the stability of his government, that his measures may be well sifted, and all objections considered before it is too late; and that he may thus share the responsibility of his acts with his sharp-sighted opponents. This kind of aid and support from the foe was especially needed by the Whigs, from their inexperience in office, and their absolute lack of training for power. Thus was Lord Brougham justified in saying that they were too strong in the new parliament; and five years afterwards, there was nobody who would not have agreed with him. At the moment, however, this popular support was a vast power for good. It fixed the kind-hearted but feeble king: it saved time when the pressure of work was extreme; and it saved the country from reflex agitation from the political storms on the continent.

Weakness of the Government.

Here perhaps ends the list of the powers of the new Ministry. They were representatives of liberal principles of policy: they stood high in political character, and were sustained by unequalled popular support. Some would have said beforehand that they must be strong in the ability of the respective members; but it did not prove so. While there was not a man among them who might not have been called able in his way, there was no one of them of commanding ability in office: no one great statesman. Lord Brougham was the man whose splendid talents were looked to for magnificent results: but he proved himself no statesman; and it was only because his supposed statesmanship was wanted that he was raised to the Woolsack while known to be no Equity lawyer. Some of his colleagues have since, after considerable training, shown high ability in office—of which Sir James Graham is an eminent example: but this training was exactly that in which they were unavoidably deficient, while it was essential to enable them to work together, and to render their respectable amount of individual ability compensate for the absence of commanding power. This want of training and of business habits is particularly incapacitating in the case of men of aristocratic station who, if they have not the discipline of official life, can hardly have any business habits or talents at all: and again, the evil was here aggravated by the new Ministers having, for the most part, spent their lives in opposition. Men in opposition inevitably form and utter rash judgments, from having only partial information on subjects of which they are called to judge. They inevitably commit themselves, so as to stand virtually pledged to courses of which they may think very differently amidst the lights of office. Thus hampered as to even the principles of much of the work to be done, they are in still greater difficulties as to the procedure.

Untrained as they were, it was absolutely necessary for the Whigs to retain the services of the underlings of former administrations. It was a bitter, a

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well-nigh fatal necessity; but a necessity it was. That men as new as their masters, clerks as inexperienced in official routine as the Ministers, could not have carried on the business of the departments, needs no showing. The men who were at the desks must be continued, in order to get through the work of every day. These men were of like politics with the late administration: or rather, they were as much stronger in political opinion than their late *chefs* as underlings are wont to be in proportion to their superiors: they were very confident that their late masters would soon come back again; and they regarded the new Whig rule as an irksome and vexatious interval between two organic periods of strong government. According to the testimony of the perplexed new Ministers and their friends, the disasters from this cause were innumerable and very serious. They were misled, quizzed, kept in the dark, left unaided at critical moments—in short, served faithlessly or not at all. It may be said, and it was said, that a great part of the capacity for government consists in securing good service. The Whig ministers pleaded that a man must himself understand the business he wants to have done before he can secure good service from fresh hands. However this may be, the fact was that they were incessantly complaining of hardship and misadventure from this cause. It is certain also that their power, popularity, and usefulness, were seriously impaired by the imperfection of the work they produced, and the flaws in the schemes they proposed. Perfection of detail might have sufficed in the absence of commanding ability of statesmanship: and commanding statesmanship might have overborne the impediment of imperfect routine execution: but here, where both the compensating powers were absent, it is a strong proof how enthusiastic was the national trust that the Whig Ministers were enabled to carry the noble series of reforms for which they have a claim to the acknowledgments of far future generations.

CHAPTER VII.

1832.

Civil List.

BEFORE the Wellington administration went out, the House of Commons had resolved that a Select Committee should examine the Civil List, in order to separate the proper expenditure of the Crown from a large and various expenditure of another kind which ought to be under the control of parliament, but was not so, from its coming arbitrarily under the head of Civil List expenditure. The King and his new Ministers went heartily to work to carry out the pleasure of the Commons, and correct the abuses of the old system. The conduct of the sovereign on this occasion was very honourable to him. As an honest, plain-minded man, it was probably more satisfactory to him to have a certain defined income, paid and accounted for quarterly, than to be troubled with a dozen kinds of revenue, necessitating a vast complication of accounts, and causing him to be continually vexed with applications and complaints about pensions and fanciful claims, and harassed by periodical inquiries and censures in parliament about the pension list. He might see how much ease and relief he would gain by turning over the whole business to parliament for rearrangement: but that he did see this from the station of the throne was such a proof of good sense, and the grace with which he surrendered every thing to the judgment of his Ministers and parliament was so entire, that his popularity was as much strengthened as it could be by any one act. He and the Queen relinquished all their annuities: and he placed at the disposal of his faithful Commons his whole interest for life in all hereditary revenues, droits of the Crown, and casual income from any source whatever, trusting to their judgment and affection to make sufficient provision for the dignity of the royal function, and for the comfort of himself and his consort. Hansard, i. 10.

Pensions.

Now was the time for the reformers and economists of the House to speak their minds about the Pension List, and to learn all that could be told about it. From this time forward, there was to be no more mystery about the granting of pensions. The yearly amount was to be fixed; and all secrecy was to be put an end to. There are many at this day who think it a matter of regret that the occasion was not used for establishing an honourable system of rewards for public service, not official, such as might befit a people now awakening to a sense of the value and dignity of science, literature, and art. For the best benefactors of society—its sages, philosophers, authors, and artists, men whose pursuits are the least likely to obtain pecuniary recompense—there is in England no appropriation worthy of government to offer, or of them to receive. The amount left at the disposal of the sovereign is destined for any kind or degree of real or imagined service, and is far too trifling to be of use in the encouragement of lofty pursuit, or the reward of exalted service. It has to be offered with an apology, and received with shame: and there are few of those whose claims are strongest that would

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choose to receive as an act of favour or favouritism from the Minister that which they would regard as an honour and unmixed blessing if conferred by parliament, out of a liberal appropriate fund. Here and there, at present, a great natural philosopher receives a pension which does not pay for his apparatus; and a poor author has a pittance which hardly provides him bread, fire, and candle, while he is penning his thoughts—rendering services to the world which no money can ever pay: and such pensioners know that their names stand among some so unconnected with all proper purposes of a pension list, that the wonder is how they ever got there. It is not to the credit of England, and was not in 1831 an honourable result of sixteen years of Peace, that hundreds of thousands of pounds should be annually appropriated for military and naval purposes, while only a pittance of a few hundreds was really disposable for honour and encouragement to the wisdom, knowledge, and ennobling arts, by which the human race is, if at all, to be exalted above the liability to war. This was the proper opportunity for establishing a National Reward Fund: but it was missed, and the occasion has never been even looked for since.

Hansard, ii. 154.

The pensions charged on the Civil List for England amounted at this time to £74,200: those for Scotland, to £31,222: those for Ireland, to £53,795:—total, £159,217. All these were legally void by the death of the sovereign who had granted them: but there was no one who wished that they should not be renewed to the individual recipients, if the system of granting could be amended. It was now proposed to reduce the amount charged on the Civil List to £75,000 for the three countries together—the amount to be made up by the oldest pensions on the List, in order that the King might have some power of bestowing grants before the end of his reign by the dying off of the oldest pensioners. Parliament was to deal with the rest as it thought fit, after they had been transferred to the Consolidated Fund. This chief point, and some less disputed matters being agreed upon, their Majesties' financial affairs stood thus:—In return for all that they had surrendered, they were to receive, in quarterly payments, during the life of both, the sum of £510,000, under the five following heads:—

Royal Income.
Will. IV. c. 25.

First Class,	For their Majesties' Privy Purse	£110,000
Second ,,	Salaries of his Majesty's Household	130,300
Third ,,	Expenses of his Majesty's Household	171,500
Fourth ,,	Special and Secret Service	23,200
Fifth ,,	Pensions	75,000
		£510,000

If the Queen survived her Consort, she was to have an income of £100,000, and Marlborough House and Bushy Park for residences.—This opening of a system of rational management of royal income and expenditure is worthy of record. The country had suffered much in purse and patience from the extravagance and debts of royal personages: and it is suffering even now; for there are tracts lying waste in our British American colonies—not only useless in themselves, but a positive impediment to cultivation—tracts made over by the Duke of York to certain jewellers and others, his creditors. Since the arrangement here chronicled, there have been no complaints of royal extravagance,

1832. no instances of royal debt: and, though we English do not admit that we are a nation of shopkeepers, it is certain that we have so much respect for high probity in money matters as to feel that the honour of the Crown is eminently enhanced by the faultlessness of the last and the present sovereign in living within their incomes.

Pauperism. The alarming increase of Pauperism throughout the kingdom has been noticed. This increase was complained of, and adverted to in terms of apprehension, year after year, in parliament and elsewhere: and when the annual poor-rate exceeded seven millions, with a clear prospect of augmentation, men began to ask, in their clubs and by their firesides, where this was to end, and who could be sure of not sinking down from being a rate-payer to becoming a rate-receiver.—Parliamentary Committees were found to be useless. A more stringent search was needed than such a body could institute. In 1832, the Crown appointed a Commission of Inquiry, consisting of nine persons, among whom were the Bishops of London and Chester, under whose direction the condition of every parish in England and Wales was investigated and reported. These Reports, in their mass, and in the nature of their details, were enough to overwhelm any faculties, and to extinguish hope. Those whose business it was to receive the documents and consider them, as they came in, week after week, for two years, could scarcely help regarding the nation as a group of people, some busy and some gay, on an island destined to be overflowed by the deep, and round whose whole circuit the waves were advancing, inch by inch, while only those who were immediately disturbed were fully conscious of the danger. There was one solid ground of hope, however—one fixed point presented—from which improvement might proceed. There were two or three parishes in England blessed with the presence of a sensible man, sagacious enough to see into the causes of parochial evils, and powerful enough to obviate them. To half a dozen quiet country residents like these, men aiming only to do the duty which lay before their doors, our country mainly owes its rescue from the most appalling danger which has ever threatened its social condition, and its comparative purification from the worst complication of vice perhaps ever caused by any institution, except that of slavery, for which she has in any age been answerable.—The amount of rate was a broad fact which every man could understand, and which any one might know from the newspaper: but, fearful as it was, it was that which pressed least upon the minds of the Commissioners and of those whom they admitted to a sight of the Reports. Among a multitude of painful facts, the most mournful was the pervading and unceasing oppression of virtue and encouragement of vice. The poor-rate had become public spoil. The ignorant believed it an inexhaustible fund which belonged to them. To obtain their share, the brutal bullied the administrators, the profligate exhibited their bastards which must be fed, the idle folded their arms and waited till they got it; ignorant boys and girls married upon it; poachers, thieves, and prostitutes, extorted it by intimidation; country justices lavished it for popularity, and guardians for convenience. This was the way the fund went. As for whence it arose—it came, more and more every year, out of the capital of the shopkeeper and the farmer, and the diminishing resources of the country gentlemen. The shopkeeper's stock and returns dwindled, as the farmer's land deteriorated, and the gentleman's expenditure contracted. The farmer's sons, waiting, at the age of five-and-thirty, for ability to marry in comfort, saw in every ditch and field on the estate lads under twenty whose children were maintained by the rates which were ruining their employer. Instead of the proper number of labourers to till his lands—labourers paid by himself—the farmer was compelled to take double the number, whose wages were paid partly out of the rates: and these men, being employed by compulsion on him, were beyond his control—worked or not as they chose—let down the quality of his land, and disabled him from employing the better men who would have toiled hard for independence. These better men sank down among the worse: the rate-paying cottager, after a vain struggle, went to the pay-table to seek relief: the modest girl might starve, while her bolder neighbour received 1*s.* 6*d.* per week for every illegitimate child. Industry, probity, purity, prudence—all heart and spirit—the whole soul of goodness—were melting down into depravity and social ruin, like snow under the foul internal fires which precede the earthquake. There were clergymen in the Commission, as well as politicians and economists; and they took these things to heart, and laboured diligently to frame suggestions for a measure which should heal and re-create the moral spirit as well as the economical condition of society in England.

Confusion of Poverty with Pauperism.

To thoughtful observers it is clear that the same grave aristocratic error which has before been adverted to—that of confounding in one all ranks below a certain level of wealth—was at the bottom of much Poor Law abuse, as it has been of the opposition to its amendment. Gentlemen in parliament who talk over poor law matters, and gentlemen in the country who discuss and administer the law, and gentlemen of the newspaper press who desire, with real benevolence, to advocate the cause of the poor, have been too apt to confound under this name classes more widely distinguishable, in fact and in principle, than any other ranks in our society—except only that of sovereign and subject. Except the distinction between sovereign and subject, there is no social difference in England so wide as that between the independent labourer and the pauper: and it is equally ignorant, immoral, and impolitic to confound the two. This truth was so apparent to the Commissioners, and they conveyed it so fully to the framers of the New Poor Law, that it forms the very foundation of the measure: and all effectual opposition to the working of the system since it became law has proceeded from blindness to this great fact and fundamental principle.—Here are two classes to be dealt with; the indigent and the independent labourer, who, however oppressed by poverty, is a noble member of the state, and can lift up his head in the consciousness that he fulfils the part of a citizen, and is beholden to no man for a degrading charity. In the pauper class, are many whom the state is willing to maintain, because they cannot maintain themselves—the sufferers under helplessness, from whatever cause: and it included also, at the time of the Reform of the Poor Law, a much larger number who were not suffering under any natural or accidental helplessness at all. These were the people whom a hasty and ignorant humanity called "the poor," and for whose support and comfort they pleaded;—pleaded as if that support and comfort were to come out of the pockets of the rich alone. Now, the very first aim of the Commissioners was

1832. to consider the poor;—the independent and virtuous and most suffering poor. While magistrates were giving to pauper applicants at their own houses an additional loaf for every child, that loaf was provided by the more high-minded labourer, who toiled to raise the rate demanded of him, while he and his children were hungering together. Both the poor man and the pauper were to be cared for; but neither of them at the expense of the other. The law ordered, and it still orders, that every man shall be fed: but every law should provide, as all moral principle does, that the pauper, while supported by public charity, should be placed in a lower condition (if only that were possible) than the man who abstains from putting out his hand to the public purse. Clear as this principle is, and much as it has been preached since 1832, there is still existing a surprising blindness to it. Appeals on behalf of the pauper are incessantly made, in forgetfulness of that class of the poor which should be considered and cherished with all possible honour and care: and those who are engaged in thus considering and cherishing an all-important class in our state are reproached with hardness of heart towards the poor on account of restrictions which are absolutely necessary as safeguards of the integrity of the people and the capital of the country. In the very few parishes where such restrictions had already been enforced, it was clear that justice and mercy were, as they must ever be, coincident. In those parishes, while all necessitous persons were relieved, idleness, and not industry, was discouraged; prudent marriage was not rendered impossible by a premium on profligacy; the land was not deteriorating, nor the capital of the district wasting away; farmers employed such labour as they wanted, and could choose it of a good quality; and the independent labourer was respected, while the pauper was pitied and fed.

New Poor Law. 1834.

Under the guidance of these few examples, and enlightened by a prodigious accumulation of evidence, the Commissioners offered their suggestions to government; and a Bill to amend the Poor Law was prepared and proposed to the consideration of parliament, early in 1834.

Its Principles.

The first principle of the new law was that of the old;—that every necessitous person had a claim to relief. The matter was to be much simplified now by the repeal of the worst restrictions of settlement. If one main object of the reform was to encourage industry, it was clearly desirable to remove the impediments to the circulation of labour. Settlement by hiring and service was to exist no longer: labour could freely enter any parish where it was wanted, and leave it for another parish which might, in its turn, want hands.

In observance of the great principle that the independent labourer was not to be sacrificed to the pauper, all administration of relief to the able-bodied at their own homes was to be discontinued as soon as possible; and the allowance system was put an end to entirely. The shameless petitioner was no longer to carry home so many shillings or loaves for so many children while his more honourable neighbour not only went without, but bore part of the cost. Henceforth, the indigent must come into the workhouse for relief, if he must have it. There stood the great house—with shelter, clothing, and food, for the destitute who chose to claim it: but, in justice to the independent poor, and to society at large, there were conditions belonging to this relief which ought never to have been objected to by reasonable persons, however irksome they might and must be to the idle, dissolute, and extremely ignorant, who form a large proportion of the pauper class. One condition was, that the able-bodied should work;—should do a certain amount of work for every meal. They might go out after the expiration of twenty-four hours; but while in the house they must work. The men, women, and children must be separated; and the able-bodied and infirm. The separation of the men and women—husbands and wives among others—was absolutely necessary to common decency, in an establishment like a work-house: and that of husbands and wives was required by every consideration of justice to the state, which could not rear a race of paupers within the work-house, to the prevention of virtuous marriage without. That the aged and infirm should be separated from the able-bodied was necessary to their own quiet and comfort. Their diet included indulgences which others could not have; and the turbulence of sturdy paupers was no fit spectacle for them. That the children should be segregated was necessary to their moral safety and educational training. No part of the new law has occasioned more complaint and opposition than this work-house classification; and no part is more clearly defensible from every point of view, or more evidently necessary. Because the work-houses could not be permitted to be rookeries for pauper families to roost in, they were called prisons; though every man could go out with his family any day, and was kept in only by the inducement of a maintenance. As for the effects of the separation and training of the children, a curious light is thrown upon the subject by a discussion which took place a few years after the reform was instituted;—a discussion among certain barristers on circuit, a large number of whom were dining together when some circumstance led them to compare their observations on work-house schools. From the encouragement given to dissoluteness by the old poor law, the first series of children in the work-houses of some of the rural districts were almost all illegitimate. The question discussed by these barristers was, what the effect on the disrepute of illegitimacy was likely to be, in the course of another generation, of the manifest superiority of the children educated in the work-houses over those of the neighbouring peasantry born in wedlock. The practical conclusion was that the children of the independent labourers must be educated up to the work-house schooling point, and as much beyond it as possible.

ITS MACHINERY.

In order to a complete and economical classification in the work-houses, and for other obvious reasons, the new Act provided for Unions of parishes—the rating and expenditure of the rates remaining a separate concern. Thus, instead of half a dozen small, expensive, and ill-arranged establishments in as many different parishes, one central house, properly prepared for its purposes, would answer all objects, and be under a completely conspicuous management. To afford the necessary control over such a system—a system so new and unwelcome to a host of local authorities and managers—a Central Board was indispensable, by whose orders, and through whose Assistant Commissioners, every thing was to be arranged, and to whom all appeals were to be directed. The Central Board was to consist of three Commissioners; and the Assistant Commissioners were at first twenty-one, diminishing to nine, as the new organization was completed. No change was proposed in regard to the rateability of property, or the mode of collecting the rate. The business of the new Act was with the application of the rate when collected. The distribution

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was left to guardians and select vestries; and, in the absence of these authorities, to overseers. The discretionary power of magistrates was much contracted, none being left which could interfere with the main aim of the reform—the subordinating the condition of the pauper to that of the independent labourer.

Of the changes proposed by the new Law, none was more important to morals than that which threw the charge of the maintenance of illegitimate children upon the mother. Hitherto the father had been made chargeable upon the oath of the mother as to his paternity. It was now proposed that the law should take no cognizance of the father at all. The Lords, however, modified this arrangement by giving an appeal to the Quarter Sessions against the father. This appeal was rendered sufficiently difficult to leave the practical operation of the law pretty much what it was intended to be, till a change was made in 1839, by which it was rendered more easy to reach the father. This change was occasioned by feelings of humanity which many wise persons still think misguided. When the law was framed, there was much wonder abroad that the Bishop of London, and many moral and humane persons about him, and not a few thoughtful women, were in favour of an arrangement which left the father of an illegitimate child "unpunished," and threw the whole burden upon the mother. The Bishop of London and his coadjutors were presently proved to be right by the demonstration of facts. The decrease of illegitimate births was what many called wonderful, but only what the framers of the law had anticipated from the removal of direct pecuniary inducement to profligacy, and from the awakening of proper care in parents of daughters, and of reflection in the women themselves. The first case or two occasioned a shock of surprise and dismay among those who had not understood the change in the law: and after that, the offence seemed almost to disappear in some districts where before it had abounded. As for the thoughtful women who did not object to the new arrangement—their feeling has been nobly expressed by one of them—Mrs. Jameson—in a passage which will not be forgotten;—a few sentences in which she indicates the benefit to the whole sex when Woman is made, even through apparent hardship, mistress of herself—the guardian of her own mind and morals, instead of the ward of Man.

Reception of the Measure.

Extracts from the Reports had been given to the public from time to time, and all reasonable means used to prepare the mind of the nation for the new measure. Up to the last moment, it was impossible to conjecture how it would be received; and therefore, how it would work: for there never was a measure which more absolutely required, for its successful working, the countenance and co-operation of the intelligent portion of society. One certain thing was, that the measure itself supposed and necessitated a repeal of the Corn Laws—by its alterations in the provisions of settlements, its general release of labour from thraldom, and its reliance on general laws; while there was too much reason to apprehend that, carefully as this was explained and proved to the Ministers, they would not admit it in parliament, if they did in their own minds. The apprehension was but too well founded. Lord John Russell and Lord Althorp, who brought forward the measure in the Commons, presently after refused even to receive evidence regarding the operation of the

1832. Corn Laws: and Lord Melbourne, Premier of the Administration which set the Bill to work, made a declaration in the Lords only less memorable than that of the Duke of Wellington against Reform of Parliament, because Lord Melbourne was the lesser man:—that he had heard many mad things said in his life; but that the Corn Laws could be repealed was, before God, the very maddest thing he had ever heard. Yet the framers of the Poor Law Amendment Act knew, and always avowed to the Whig Ministers, that the measure could never have a fair chance of working till the Corn Laws were repealed; and in the interval they must pray for a succession of good harvests. On the occurrence of the first deficient harvest, it would probably be necessary—as they said in the freedom of conversation—to march soldiers to superintend the enforcement of the law. Nor did any condemnation of the measure lie in this assertion: for the state of things under the old law was so desperate that any determination short of desperation in the enforcement of the Amendment Act might be a mere matter of prudence. Except for the complication of the Corn Laws with this measure, there was nothing to make it a party affair. Every body was suffering under the existing system; and while the proposed reform was brought forward by a Liberal Ministry, none were more eager for it than the landed interest, in and out of the House. If it was probable that the country justices would resent the restriction of their powers in their own province, it was certain that their neighbours the farmers—of the same politics—were sinking under the burden of the rates, and would welcome any prospect of relief. As it was not a party matter, it was impossible to divine how the newspapers would go. The only thing considered certain under this head was that the *Times*—the great paper of all—was wholly in favour of the Reform. One of the editors had, a few days previously, sent a message declaratory of intended support, to some of the managers of the measure. Up to the last moment, though the prospect was wholly uncertain, every thing looked well.

And at midnight of the 17th of April, every thing looked better still. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, Lord Althorp, had obtained leave from the Commons to bring in the Bill. His speech, plain, earnest, and impressive, had produced a strong effect upon the House, and his proposal had been respectfully greeted and warmly supported. The members went home, feeling convinced that the evils of the Poor Law system were virtually abolished, and that this "great political gangrene of England" was successfully dealt with at last. When each of them took up the *Times* from the breakfast table, the next morning, to gratify himself with the study of its advocacy of the measure—an advocacy sure to be more finely expressed than any that could be heard elsewhere—what was the amazement to find a thundering article against the measure! It became known afterwards that the change in the mind of the *Times* had taken place at the very last moment. It was naturally declared and believed to be owing to evidence received of the hostility of the country justices to the measure: and the country justices were not only the great provincial support of the *Times* newspaper, but composed an influence too important to be lightly regarded. Whatever might be the reason, the *Times* newspaper certainly did, at the last moment, change its mind about supporting the New Poor Law. The fact—of the suddenness of the change—in con-

Hansard, xxii. 874.

1832. nexion with the temper of the new opposition, is worth noting, as illustrative of the character of newspaper support or opposition in our day. The side which the *Times* would take was a chance pregnant with good and evil consequences which will influence the fate of whole generations. The hostility has been so venomous, so unscrupulous, so mischievous in one direction, and so beneficial in others, so pertinacious, so vigilant, and so remarkably based upon the aristocratic error before alluded to—of confusing all ranks below a certain level—that it could not be passed over in the history of a time when the Press is admitted to be our Fourth Estate.

Before London had breakfasted, a wealthy member of the Commons was in the City, with a friend, and had bought the *Morning Chronicle:* and comrades were beating about for writers of the leading articles; writers well familiarized with the new measure. The consternation of the Ministers was not small. There was to be a Cabinet Council that day; and the Lord Chancellor wrote a note to Lord Althorp, to ensure his attendance, as it was to be considered whether the *Times* should be propitiated or defied. Some expressions were added, not very complimentary to the editor who had lately offered support. Some tidings having arrived from Lord Althorp which rendered the note unnecessary, it was torn up, and the scraps thrown among waste papers under the table. Some mischievous person picked them up, pasted them in order, and sent them to the person remarked on, who was not propitiated by what he read. From that hour, the virulence with which the leading paper pursued the Lord Chancellor, the New Poor Law, and the parties concerned in its preparation, exceeded any hostility encountered by the Whig government from any other quarter, and certainly had no small effect in impairing their much-weakened influence and popularity, and in impeding the working of Poor Law Reform. The mischief done was by the dishonesty of the paper in constantly misrepresenting the enactments and operation of the New Law; in imputing to it the faults of the old system which it was actually in course of remedying; in fostering the prejudices, and perpetuating the mischievous powers, of the least enlightened of the country justices; in upholding the cause of the unworthy among the indigent by confounding them with the worthy among the poor;—in short, by a partial and unscrupulous and unintermitting hostility to a measure which had its faults, but which was not only necessary in its time, but an eminent glory of its time, and which it would have been a moral benefit to Englishmen to appreciate better than they have done. The good effected by this hostility has, on the other hand, been very great. Bad as has been its temper and principle, it has acted in the name of humanity, and it has done some of the best work of humanity. Nothing in the shape of an abuse, a hardship, or a levity in the treatment of the poor, has it ever let pass. It has incessantly been unjust, and more cruel than the persons and usages it denounced: but it has induced a spirit of watchfulness and a sense of responsibility in official men—it has evoked a spirit of humanity in society, for which the whole class of sufferers may be grateful, and for the sake of which the most feeling moralists may subdue their natural and well-grounded resentment, and cheerfully acquiesce in the results which will remain when the warfare and all its disgraces, on every hand, are forgotten.

Hansard, xxv. 1254. On the 14th of August, 1834, the Royal assent was given to the Poor Law

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Amendment Act, amidst prognostications of utter failure from the timid, and some misgivings among those who were most confident of the absolute necessity of the measure. These last knew that it was either now or never. When a member in the Commons complained of the short time allowed for the consideration of the Lords' amendments, Lord Althorp declared that he would be a bold man who should bring forward the Bill in another session, after it had once been dropped. It is true—and the fact was repeatedly brought forward in the course of the debate—the abuses of the Poor Law were almost all under forty years old; and the present object was rather to restore the principle and revert to the operation of the Law of Elizabeth than to establish a new system: but still, there was the great and fearful fact before all men's eyes of the demoralization of the peasantry;—of their moral and social state being so bad, in many parts of the country, that it was a grave question whether they could be retrieved. It must be now or never. It appeared from the Reports that a remnant still existed of the peasant order as it was before the corruption of the Poor Law—a few hearty old men between sixty and eighty, sprinkled through the country parishes, who had, for the forty years of misrule, talked of the good old times, and turned away from the pay-table with a disgust which would operate well now, while the new purification was going forward. Of these, there would be fewer every year; and the advantage of their presence was certainly an additional reason why the reform should not be delayed. The Bill became law: the law came into speedy operation:—for a time (long enough to secure the reform) the seasons were kind, and events were favourable. Every body was not convinced—and every body is not convinced yet—of the blessedness of the retrieval we have enjoyed. There are many who charge upon the new law the abuses of the old, and the difficulties which attend upon the very institution of a poor law; there are many who charge upon the law itself some gross faults in parts of its administration; there are many who will never be satisfied till every poor person is thoroughly comfortable in his own home (a virtuous aspiration, but one not to be fulfilled by a poor law of any nature); but there are also many who think with a kind of shudder what our condition would have been by this time under the old law, or a less stringent reform. The facts which all men might know if they would are, that before two years were out, wages were rising and rates were falling in the whole series of country parishes: farmers were employing more labourers; surplus labour was absorbed; bullying paupers were transformed into steady working men; the decrease of illegitimate births, chargeable to the parish throughout England, was nearly 10,000, or nearly 13 per cent.; clergymen testified that they were relieved from much of the pain and shame of having to celebrate marriages where the bride was on the point of becoming a mother, or where the parties were mere children, with no other prospect than the parish pay-table; and, finally, the rates, which had risen nearly a million in their annual amount during the five years before the Poor Law Commission was issued, sank down, in the course of the five years after it, from being upwards of seven millions to very little above four. After that time, when a long period of severe distress ensued, the new law was found insufficient (pending the maintenance of the Corn Laws, it must be remembered) to deal with the needs of our large manufacturing towns, as any other

Hansard, xxv. 1221.

Its Passage.

Its Operation.

Second Annual Report.

Penny Cyclopædia, art. Pauperism.

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poor law would have been. Of this we shall have to speak under its own date, as also of the changes found to be necessary in the application of the Amendment Act: but, from first to last, its operation in the rural districts has been not only salutary, but nothing short of salvation. This reform must ever be regarded as in the first rank of the honours of the Whig Administration, and of the pregnant victories of the Peace.

Factory Children.

The Poor Law Inquiry was not the only one which disclosed facts of guilt and misery in our social state which might have lain concealed under the excitements of War, but which became gradually revealed amidst the quietude of Peace. The Poor Law Commissioners had discovered how brutal and wretched was the condition of the children of rural labourers in too many districts of the country;—of children who struggled with the pigs for food during the day, doing nothing useful, learning nothing which raised them above the beasts of the field—and at night huddled down on damp straw, under a roof of rotten thatch—or went out to carry poached game, or fire the farmers' stacks. Another picture, equally mournful, was presented from the factory districts. Throughout the manufacturing districts, in ordinary years, there ought to be a sufficient provision for all who are not behind their times—like the poor hand-loom weavers, who would have power-looms put down, to give them work. Such cannot be effectually aided, but among other classes, if there were sense, knowledge, and goodness, there need have been no poverty at the time we speak of. This knowledge and goodness, however, are what the nation has taken no pains to cultivate in the mass, and to diffuse among the classes which are least able to desire them for themselves: and hence has arisen the misery, the unspeakable disgrace, of the corruption of the parental relation among large numbers of our people. At the time now under review, it became known that parents sold their children to excessive labour; and it has since become known that a considerable number have sold them to death through the Burial Clubs—actually poisoned them for the sake of the burial money, after entering the clubs for the very purpose. When Mr. Sadler and Lord Ashley brought forward the subject of the oppression of the Factory Children in 1833, the question of legal protection to these children was as difficult an one as could be brought under the notice of any Ministry and parliament. It is admitted by the most sagacious to be an insoluble difficulty. By guilty neglect we had brought ourselves into an inextricable embarrassment, which has become only more apparent, and not less perplexing to deal with, during all the discussion which has taken place from that day to this. Amidst much legislation which has been ventured upon, the question is apparently as far as ever from being settled—the great question, whether effectual legislation is possible between parents and children, and in defiance of the great natural laws which regulate the operation of labour and capital. By our guilty neglect we had placed in abeyance the still greater natural laws of the human heart, which alone can overrule economical laws; and now we were reduced to try the fearful experiment whether, by interposing thus late with feeble arbitrary decrees and arrangements, we were likely to mitigate or aggravate the existing evil.

Here were children—little creatures whose life should have been spent in growing, in body and mind—employed all day and far into the night, in the

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monotonous and stupifying work of spinning in the mills. Most of the mills were found to be fairly wholesome: the owners were not oppressors: the pay was good: the work was not in itself severe, or otherwise objectionable: and all representations of the case as, generally speaking, worse than this were found to be untrue. But it was too true that the parents let out their children to that class of middlemen, the spinners, from whom neither the care of parents nor the consideration of educated masters was to be looked for: and the children were kept too long standing—too long awake—too long on the stretch over work which was not in itself of a hurtful nature. People who thought only of the children's instant welfare, and not of the considerations of justice and of actual practicability with which the case was complicated, clamoured for a law which should restrict the hours of labour, and determine the ages of the persons who should be employed in the cotton and silk mills. Economists showed how vain had always been, and must ever be, laws to regulate labour and wages. Statesmen knew how vain it was to interfere by law with private relations: and the mill-owners complained of the injustice of arbitrarily raising wages; while this was exactly the prospect which delighted the operatives. They began to see before them a long perspective of legal protection and privilege, by which they as well as their children should obtain the same wages for less and less work, while too few of them perceived that any law which should deprive them of the free disposal of their own labour would steal from them their only possession, and be in fact a more flagrant oppression than any law had inflicted on their order for centuries. Such was the diversity of opinion in society in 1833, when a demand was made in parliament for an Act which should regulate the labour of children in factories. The Ministers were fully aware of the difficulty in which they stood, and they endeavoured to satisfy all parties, at the expense of the smallest amount of mischief. They sent out a Commission to obtain evidence and report.

When the time came for the commissioners to report and suggest, it was clear that their convictions were just what might have been expected. The evil of overworking children was clear. Though there were fewer swollen joints, shrunken limbs, and distorted spines, than had been represented, there was far too much of stunted growth, and far too little of the character of natural childhood, among those who were called "the victims of the factory system," but who were in fact the victims of their parents' poverty or heartlessness. But could a cure be found in a mere law? The Commissioners thought not. They foresaw that there would be false swearing about the children's ages, and deception in many ways that no law could obviate or detect:—the parents from whom children needed protection being exactly those who would have least scruple about deception and perjury. But the Commissioners had not to decide whether there should be a law or not. It was evidently settled that there should be one: and what the Commissioners had to do therefore was, first, to suggest the best kind of law under the circumstances, and next, to introduce and promote by it the measures in which they believed the remedy really to lie. About one of the remedies they could do nothing—that free importation of food which ought naturally at once to accompany a free circulation of labour, and to obviate all restrictions on it. The next most important, the education of the children, they thought they could introduce under the

1833. head of factory arrangements. The measure of education would be but small, and its quality but poor, if instituted in a way so indirect as this, and as an ostensibly subordinate object: but the Commissioners thought that any educational training was better than none, and that they could but try for this collateral success, convinced as they were that the measure must fail in its professed object. They therefore proposed that the children should be secured from working for more than half the day by being placed at school, and certified to be there during some hours of the other half.

Political Dictionary, ii. 3.

The Factory Bill of 1833 has received so many alterations since, that it would be useless to give a minute account of its provisions. It is enough to say that, except in silk mills, no child under nine years of age was to be employed at all: children under eleven were not to be employed more than nine hours in any one day, nor more than forty-eight hours in one week: and after a time, this provision extended to children under thirteen years of age. School attendance was provided for—the cost (not to exceed 1*d.* in the 1*s.*) to be paid out of the child's wages, if the mill-owner desired it. Medical supervision was ordered; and four Factory Inspectors were appointed, to watch over the operation of the Act. This was the beginning of that legislation protective of factory labour which has gone on to this day;—the opening of a great controversy which is far from being concluded, and whose consequences lie deep in a future which no man now living shall see.

CHAPTER VIII.

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THERE were two matters of great importance which must be considered at this time, whoever might be in or out of power, and whatever might be happening, at home or abroad. The two great charters, of the India Company and of the Bank of England, were to expire in 1834, and it must be timely determined whether they were to be renewed, and on what conditions. As has been notified, a parliamentary committee had already been appointed, and had begun its work of inquiring into the claims and affairs of the India Company. On the 22nd of May, 1832, the Chancellor of the Exchequer proposed a similar inquiry in regard to the Bank of England. This last committee was, however, a secret one, for the obvious reason that disclosures on currency subjects, for a succession of months, with uncertainty at the end of it, would embarrass all commercial transactions. The committee sat, and diligently pursued its inquiry during the rest of the session, offering its report on the 11th of August. This committee was appointed on the fifth day after the return of Lord Grey and his colleagues to power; and it began its abstract and passionless work while words were running high in the other house between Lords Kenyon and Grey, and while the remnant of anti-reforming peers were undergoing defeat as often as they adventured a division on the clauses of the Reform Bill. Such were the days when the Bank Committee sat, and when the very eminent men who were in it were preparing a report of extraordinary value. They felt the seriousness of their work; and well they might. The last renewal of the exclusive privileges of the Bank had taken place in 1800, when the term assigned was a year's notice after the 1st of August, 1833: and during that interval what vicissitudes and alarms had taken place! What warnings of the disastrous nature of errors in currency matters, and of the magnitude of the interests now to be involved in an engagement for another term of years. The distresses of 1814, the crisis of 1819, and the crash of 1825-6, were fresh in the recollection of several members of the committee, and a matter of deep interest to all: and under this stimulus, they so exerted themselves that their report is considered—in connexion with the evidence on which it is founded—the most important instrument towards the establishment of sound principles of banking as yet offered to the government and people of England. Among others, there were on the committee, Sir Robert Peel, Mr. Poulett Thomson, Sir Henry Parnell, Mr. John Smith, Mr. Baring, Mr. Warburton, Mr. Morrison, Mr. Bonham Carter, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer—statesmen, financiers, economists, and practical men of business.—What they had to investigate was this:—whether the paper money of London should be limited to the issues of one bank, or whether a competition of issues should be allowed:—whether all the exclusive privileges of the Bank of England were necessary, supposing it to be still the only bank

Renewal of the Bank Charter.

M'Culloch's Commercial Dictionary, p. 66.

Hansard, xii. 1363.

Report of Secret Committee, August 11, 1832.

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of issue in London:—and what checks were desirable to secure the public from danger from banks of issue, and especially whether a periodical publication of accounts would be a benefit or a disadvantage. On these points, the Committee gave a vast amount of information, without any imposition of decided opinions of their own. They did all that time and circumstances allowed in laying before parliament the fullest materials for a judgment, and in venturing to reveal the exact state of the affairs of the Bank of England, thereby breaking up the system of mystery which had hitherto been one of the dangerous privileges of the Bank Corporation. Up to this date, the Directors had preserved the most cautious secrecy about their affairs, declaring dividends, year after year, upon their own arbitrary judgment, without any sanction of publicity. Now, however, the House of Commons printed the Report of the Secret Committee; and it was understood that darkness would never again be allowed to settle down on the transactions of the great corporation.

Political Dictionary, i. 265—267.

A new Charter was granted, terminable "at any time upon twelve months' notice to be given after the 1st of August, 1855:" and the privileges of the Bank might cease sooner, upon the fulfilment of certain conditions by the country; one of which was the repayment by parliament of upwards of eleven millions, owing by the public to the Bank. The Bank retained, under the new Charter, the chief of its old privileges; and one principal new advantage in a restriction on all other banks, having more than six partners, from issuing notes or bills within sixty-five miles of London. A great convenience was also afforded to the Bank by its notes, and the notes of its Branches, being made a legal tender every where but at the Bank and its Branches. By this provision, the Bank was saved the expense, inconvenience, and risk of having to keep up, all over the kingdom, stocks of bullion to meet any run which might occur in any direction, at any time. There was some alarm at first among half-informed people about this provision, which was regarded as countenancing a sort of inconvertible paper currency: but the holders were in fact in exactly the same position as before in regard to the convertibility of the notes, while new facilities were, at the same time, added for obtaining cash in any of its forms from the Bank, by the establishment of new Branches. All Branch notes were made payable only at their place of issue. Weekly returns of bullion and of notes in circulation were to be sent in to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, in order to publication in the *London Gazette*—a provision of publicity which has worked so well as to be carefully renewed, after ten years of trial. One-fourth of the debt due from the public to the Bank was immediately paid, by an assignment of Stock previously held by the Commissioners of the National Debt. In consideration of its new privileges, the Bank was to deduct £120,000 per annum from its charge for the business of conducting the National Debt affairs. At the time of this inquiry, the total receipts of the Bank for the year were £1,689,176: and its expenses somewhat under £500,000; leaving £1,164,235 to be divided among the proprietors. The establishment employed about 1000 persons, and supported 193 pensioners; the average receipts of the 1000 functionaries being £225 each, and those of the pensioners £161 each.—Such were the state and constitution of the Bank of England on the granting of the new Charter of

1834. It will be seen hereafter how the never-ceasing changes of commercial affairs, and the imperfection of the best knowledge on the great subject of the circulating medium compelled in ten years a remodelling of the constitution of the Bank, with a provision for another change, if necessary, in ten years more. For these further arrangements an essential preparation was made by the new provision for publicity; by the establishment of more Branches, with better security against a disastrous local drain; and by the thought and knowledge brought to bear upon the subject in the investigations and discussions of 1832 and 1833.

INDIA COMPANY'S CHARTER.

A more striking change than any in the constitution of the Bank could be to society at large took place at the same time. For nearly two centuries and a half, the merchant vessels of the East India Company had traversed the seas, before the eyes of the world. This magnificent Association had formed the link between the barbarism of the past and distant, and the civilization of the future in its home: and now it was to be quietly let drop as useless—the east and the west having come into a communication which should now be left free. The commerce of this corporation, which had once been altogether a facility, had become a monopoly; and the changes of centuries required that it should be broken up. So the Company remain princes, but no longer merchant princes.—About a quarter of a century before the time now under notice, a Liverpool merchant, the most honoured of his class, Mr. William Rathbone, was in London, and, struck with the spectacle of the Company's shipping, he inquired of a London merchant at his elbow why such a trade—a trade so great, and so capable of unlimited expansion—was quietly left to be the property of a corporation. His friend replied by convincing him of the overwhelming power of the Company in London, under whose shadow no discontent could stir with impunity; and the two agreed that whenever any movement was made, it must be in the provinces. Mr. Rathbone was not a man to loiter over any work which he saw ought to be done. He stirred up Liverpool, Glasgow, Paisley, and Manchester, to demand an opening of the trade; and the movement had proceeded so far before 1813, when the Company's Charter was to expire, that a considerable relaxation of the monopoly was then obtained. From that time British merchants were permitted to trade to the territories of the Company, and India generally, though none but the Company might traffic with China. During the next twenty years, the doctrine of Free Trade had been elaborated and partially practised; the demand for tea had largely increased in England; those who had visited the United States could tell what a variety of Chinese productions they had seen in the houses of the Salem merchants, and in the shops of New York, and how much they had heard of the desire of thickly-peopled China for a supply of European and American productions: and the demand for a complete opening of the eastern seas had become too strong to be resisted. By the Charter of 1813, the Company had been bound to keep their territorial and commercial accounts separate: and on their first examination, it was clear that they could not for a moment compete with private merchants in supplying India with manufactured goods, to the advantage of both parties. In fifteen years, the Company's exports of manufactured cottons to India had dwindled to almost nothing, while those of private merchants exceeded in value a million and a

M'Culloch's Commercial Dict. p. 502.

1833. half per annum, and were still on the increase. After all that the English public had been told of the immutability of Hindoo habits, and the impossibility of any great expansion of trade, it became clear that the Hindoos, like other people, would stretch out their hands to obtain good and comfortable things, if only such things were placed within their reach. Bishop Heber's Journals were by this time published; and they told of the strong disposition of both Hindoos and Mohammedans in India to imitate the English, and obtain whatever was necessary to enable them to assume an English mode of living:—he tells of jackets and trowsers, shoes and stockings, round hats, English furniture, French devices and mottoes on jewellery, English hardware, crockery, writing-desks, arms, and clothing—not only in and near Calcutta, but in remote provincial towns. This much having been proved, the commercial world did not attend to what the Company now said of the immutability of Chinese habits, and the impossibility of any great expansion of trade there. It was time to try. The Company took warning by their experience of the results of competition with private enterprise in India, and did not insist upon renewing the experiment in China. Their age as traders was past; and they now retired upon their territorial dignity, leaving a large section of the world open to British commerce. It was a striking event to a multitude of people at home, and to many abroad. Almost every body reckoned on having cheap tea, and plenty of it; and some anticipated that a few houses in London and our principal ports might soon have curiosities to show like those of Salem and New York;—elegant matting, a variety of serviceable silks, extraordinary toys, and Chinese copies of English prints—a miracle of painstaking. Many, it may be hoped, thought of the blessing to the Chinese of new means and opportunities of civilization; and some, of the effect upon the relations of the whole world of the throwing open the intercourse between the East and the West which, whether cursed with a war at the outset or not, was certainly necessary to an ultimate condition of fraternization and peace. In this view, one point was of eminent interest to some of the best people living in the world. In these newly-opened countries of the East, there are wide regions—broad belts of soil and climate,—fitted for the production of sugar and cotton. It is the limitation of the area for the production of sugar and cotton which protracts the existence of negro slavery. It is well to use all possible means of appeal to the justice and humanity of men, to induce an abolition of negro slavery: but here was another opening for hope and enterprise. If slavery were not abolished sooner, it certainly must be by a cheaper production of sugar and cotton in the east by free labour than can be accomplished in the west by slave labour. No such possibility existed while the India Company held the East in their hand: but now the prospect seemed to be opening; and in this view, again, the date of the expiration of the Company's Charter might be one of high importance in the history of the world.

Polit. Dict. i. p. 797. By the Act of 1833, the Charter was renewed for twenty years, during which time the territorial government remains in the hands of the Company. From the 22nd of April, 1834, the China and tea trade of the Company was to cease, and all its commercial concerns were to be wound up, and its commercial property sold. All the restrictions which prevented the free admission of Europeans, and their free residence in India, were repealed; and equality of claim

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to office and employment between natives and foreigners was decreed. There was to be no distinction on account of race, colour, or religion. From that day, new hopes have been dawning upon the East; and it is now universally understood that the great work to be done in India is to raise the native population by educational methods, and by a just administration of our power, and not, as it once was, to keep them down by force—whether for their own sake or ours. As for the commercial results of the new Charter, the number of ships which passed to and fro increased year by year, even before the introduction of steam navigation into those seas. In ten years, the trade with China had doubled, and the value of British and Irish exports to India and Ceylon had increased from two millions and a half to six millions and nearly half.

Negro Slavery.

During the same period, as is observed in the commercial registers of the time, the value of the exports to the West Indies had declined. These colonies were in a disturbed and unsatisfactory state. For some years, the experiment of a gradual preparation of the slave for freedom had been going on; and with the inevitable result of failure. The slaves were informed by the arrival of successive Orders in Council, by the appointment of Protectors of Slaves, and by the trial of a few slave causes, that they had rights: and when a man of any colour once knows to a certainty that he has rights which are withheld from him by parties close at hand, he is never contented again in his wronged condition. The planters were as restless in their way as the slaves. They resented the Orders in Council, and every thing in the shape of admonition from home, as an unwarrantable interference with their management of their property; and they refused the slave registration and other observances prescribed by Government. The language in their Assemblies was audaciously disrespectful and petulant; and in Trinidad there was a proposition that the inhabitants should refuse to pay taxes till the last Order in Council was rescinded. In December, 1831, a formidable insurrection broke out in Jamaica, which occasioned suspension of business and other loss, and was put down only by martial law: and in the following April the West India merchants in London endeavoured to make Government liable for the losses thus incurred, and for all which, in the opinion of the planters, could be traced to the operation of the Orders, or of other movements in behalf of the slave. When, at this meeting, the responsibility for all disorders was thrown upon the British Government, and protests and claims were sent in to the Colonial Secretary "in consequence of the measures pursued by his Majesty's Ministers," it was clear that a final settlement of the great question was at hand. It was now too late to desert the cause of the slaves, and hand them over to the arbitrary management of their owners. There must be a final issue; and the planters were bringing it on as fast as they could. If they had not done so, events would. In the three years from 1828, the production of sugar had so far lessened as that the imports in England had sunk from 198,400 tons to 185,660 tons. The planters believed that they could recover their ground if England would give them aid, and only leave them to manage their slaves in their own way; while England felt, not only that the negroes were fellow-subjects as well as the whites, but that no power on earth could roll back the years so as to reinstate the planters in their former position. By their present conduct,

Annual Register, 1832, p. 273.

1833. the West India merchants and proprietors hurried on the crisis at a rate not dreamed of by the friends of the negro at home.

Hansard, xii. 596. On the 17th of April, the Earl of Harewood presented to the House of Lords a petition from persons interested in the colonies, for a full parliamentary inquiry into the laws, usages, and condition of the West India colonies, their past improvements, and possible future ameliorations—due regard being had to "the best interests of the slaves themselves, and the rights of private property." The committee was granted; and the last Order in Council was suspended for the time. On the 24th of May, the Lord Chancellor presented a Hansard, xiii. 6. petition from 135,000 persons, resident in and near London, praying for the speedy abolition of slavery, and that no delay might be caused by the appointment of the West India committee. Lord Suffield followed with twenty-one petitions to the same purpose. While these were discussed in the one House, Hansard, xiii. 38. Mr. T. Fowell Buxton was moving in the other for a Select Committee to prepare for the extinction of slavery in the British dominions at the earliest possible moment. It is painful now to read the debate on this occasion, not only on account of the perpetual pleas which make the reader blush for the conscience of the legislature—pleas of the good food, light work, and relief from responsibility, of the slaves, and of their enjoyment of the blessings of Christianity—but on account of the timidity and supineness of many who called themselves the friends of the negroes. Mr. Buxton had a hard battle to fight: but he stood his ground. He must have been aware that he understood the matter, while his opponents, of all parties, did not. He knew that the abolition of slavery was inevitable; and that the most speedy abolition would be the safest for all parties. He knew that a gradual preparation of a slave for freedom was an impossible thing:—he knew that to leave the matter in the hands of the Government was to give up the cause:—he knew that to revert to the Resolutions of the 15th of May, 1823, was to acquiesce in another nine years' delay:—he knew that to mix up in the same motion the questions of emancipation and of compensation to the planters would be to expose the great moral to all the risks of the minor financial question: and he therefore stood firm, amidst the entreaties of friends, the mockery of foes, and the somewhat contemptuous displeasure of the Ministers, who on this occasion could not be ranked either with friends or foes. Lord Althorp, unaware what a work he and his colleagues were destined to do in a few short months, Hansard, xiii. 60. "would not pledge himself to any immediate abolition of slavery, because he did not think that the slave-population was in a situation to receive that boon beneficially for themselves; but he thought that the legislature might employ itself most usefully in bringing the slaves to such a state of moral feeling as would be suitable to the proposed alteration in their condition:" and he moved an amendment on Mr. Buxton's motion in favour of "conformity with the Resolutions of this House of the 15th of May, 1823." Thus far were our statesmen behind the time, that one of the most honest, one of the most sensitive to the claims of justice, was unaware that the only possible education for the use of rights is in the exercise of the rights themselves, and was unashamed to revert to the barren resolutions of nine years before. In that spirit of rectitude which includes the truest mercy, Mr. Buxton

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refused to surrender his motion, even if he should vote alone. Ninety, however, voted on his side, and 163 on the other. This majority of 73 on Lord Althorp's side was not so large as was expected: and it was probably outnumbered, a hundred times over, by the converts to Mr. Buxton's view outside the House, who could bring an effectual force to bear on the Government.

Abolition Movements.

This question is one which implicates not two quarters of the world only, but three;—not Europe and Africa only, but America. It is necessary to survey the whole area of the operation of negro slavery, in order to give the true history of any one part. There was at this date an infant movement in the United States which was destined to signalize our century as the Reformation distinguished its own age. Some who live nearest to the cradle of this reformation are only now — five-and-twenty years after its birth — beginning to perceive with any clearness the magnitude of the event: but so it is with all the great transitions in the world. While the Reformation was going on, multitudes of ordinary people in Germany were living on as usual, in unconsciousness that any thing remarkable was befalling the world:—"likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded:" and if any stranger had inquired of them about the new prophet and his doctrine, they would have denied that such existed, till the fire-shower of Luther's denunciations came to burn up the superstitions of the age. Thus it was now in the United States, where the gibbet and the tar-kettle and the cow-hide were preparing for the patriots of the community; and the time was drawing on when the rights of Petition to Congress, of the Press, and of free speech, were to be suspended, in order to be restored with increased security, for the object of freeing the soil from negro slavery. Before this could happen, some noble hearts must be broken; some precious lives sacrificed; some public halls burned, and many private dwellings laid waste: but the end was decreed, and the beginning was now made. In 1830, two young men had been wont to walk across the Common at Boston, and discuss the right way of setting about the abolition of slavery in America: and they and another—poor and obscure, all three of them—had met in a garret, and there, with their feet upon a wood-pile, and by the light of a single candle, they had solemnly resolved steadfastly to measure their moral force against the hideous evil. It has fallen to them and their followers to contend for a wider emancipation than that of the negroes; to be the champions, in the New World, of freedom of opinion, speech, and the press; and before their work—now secure, but not fully accomplished—is finally dismissed from their hands, it may appear that yet other kinds of freedom have been brought in and established by them. The conflict between the powers of light and darkness, of liberty and tyranny, in the United States is now, in the middle of the century, approaching its issue. At the time when Mr. Buxton stood up in the British House of Commons, refusing to yield his point, an indomitable brother-reformer over the seas had presented his manifesto in one of the finest declarations ever given to the world. No one knew better than Mr. Buxton, and no one would have been more eager to explain the fact—that the brother-spirit over the seas had infinitely the harder lot, and the most arduous work, of the two for his portion. It was only by living on bread and water that the confessor of this

1833. mighty cause could obtain means to publish his paper. "When it sold particularly well," says his partner in the sacrifice, "we treated ourselves with a bowl of milk." In the small, shabby first sheet of "The Liberator," printed with old types, we find the manifesto which will not be forgotten while the Anglo-Saxon liberties and language last. "I am aware," says Garrison, "that many object to the severity of my language; but is there not cause for severity? I *will* be as harsh as truth, and as uncompromising as justice. I am in earnest—I will not equivocate—AND I WILL BE HEARD. The apathy of the people is enough to make every statue leap from its pedestal, and to hasten the resurrection of the dead. It is pretended that I am retarding the cause of emancipation by the coarseness of my invective, and the precipitancy of my measures. The charge is not true. On this question my influence, humble as it is, is felt at this moment to a considerable extent, and shall be felt in coming years—not perniciously, but beneficially; not as a curse, but as a blessing; and posterity will bear witness that I was right. I desire to thank God that he enables me to disregard the fear of man, and to speak his truth in its simplicity and power."—There were persons in the House of Commons who exclaimed against coarseness and precipitancy, and called out for soft words, and a mincing gait towards the object—the gaze reverting to the resolutions of nine years before. But the men who understood the case knew that events—and not any impulse of impatient minds—now called for a thundering utterance, and a tread that should shake the ground. The demand for liberty was now one which could not be neglected. The property question might be considered too; but it must not be permitted to cause the delay of the greater argument. Though defeated on the division, Mr. Buxton had made this clear; and from that day there was no more halting on either shore of the Atlantic.

A vote of relief in money to the West India colonies, on account of a destructive hurricane in Barbadoes, St. Vincent, and St. Lucia, was now made to include Jamaica, on account of the recent insurrection, and raised from 100,000*l.* to 1,000,000*l.* The Chancellor of the Exchequer declared that it would require 800,000*l.* to rebuild the premises destroyed by the insurgent slaves.—It was in this same year that the slaves in America heard of Garrison's manifesto; and from that time they ceased to rise. Till then, revolts had been frequent—several taking place every year. Since Garrison, the "peace-man," has arisen in their behalf, there has not been one.

By the 14th of the next May, the Government had declared that they had found the pressure of public opinion on the subject of slavery too strong to be resisted; and they had brought forward, by the mouth of Mr. Stanley (who had become Colonial Secretary), a series of resolutions, which were to be debated on the 30th of the same month. In the speech of the Secretary, introducing the resolutions, nothing is more remarkable than the narrative given of West India distress; a distress so frequently recurring, so incessantly complained of, in all conditions of war and peace, and of changing seasons, as to show that the secret of prosperity does not lie in slavery, and that there was some fatal fault in the system which the planters were so unwilling to have touched. There was nothing in this narrative to surprise the economists, in or out of the House; and the economists and the friends of the negro, and the most enlightened of

Hansard, xvii. 1230.

the advocates of the planters, were alike sorry to see in the Resolutions a clinging to the unsound method of "gradualism" in the abolition of slavery. It was proposed that all children born after the passing of any Act of emancipation, and all that should be under six years old at the time of its passage, should be declared free:—that all others, then slaves, should be registered as apprenticed labourers, being considered free, except for the restriction of being compelled to labour for their present owners, under conditions, and for a space of time to be determined by parliament:—that a loan, not exceeding 15,000,000*l.*, should be offered to the planters; and that parliament should provide for the expense of a local magistracy, and of means of education and religious training of the negroes.

Mr. Buxton declared at once against the compulsory apprenticeship, as a device pregnant with mischief. He was joined by one who had been a member of the Government, Lord Howick, who had resigned office from his inability to countenance this provision, and his reluctance to introduce confusion into the Government by his opposition, otherwise than as an independent member of the House. This apprenticeship arrangement was one great difficulty: and the loan was another. The planters and their advocates considered the amount a mere pittance, and yet were sure they could never repay it. With a good grace, the loan of fifteen millions was converted into a gift of twenty millions; and the term of apprenticeship was reduced. Mr. Buxton was so well supported in his opposition, that Government had no choice but to yield. The field-slaves were to have been apprenticed for twelve years; and the house slaves for seven:—their terms were now reduced to seven and five. As to the money part of the affair, there were many who saw and declared that, in strict principle, there could be no claim for compensation for deprivation of that which, from its very nature, never could have been property: and such opposed any payment at all to the planters, as they would have refused to purchase a slave who could be freed without. But the greater number, seeing how long the law had recognised human beings as property, and on how bare a legal basis all right to property rests, were willing to avoid subtle controversy, and to close the dispute rather with generous concession than with rigidity; and the gift of twenty millions was voted with an alacrity which must ever be considered a remarkable and honourable sign of the times. The generous acquiescence of the people under this prodigious increase of their burdens has caused the moralists of other nations to declare that the British Act of Emancipation stands alone for moral grandeur in the history of the world; while those of other nations who do not happen to be moralists, see in it only an inexplicable hypocrisy, or obscure process of self-interest.

Hansard, xvii. 1231.

NEGRO EMANCIPATION.

On the 30th of August, 1833, the Emancipation Act passed the Lords. The name, and much of the substance of slavery was to expire on the 1st of August, 1834. The young children were then to be free; and the Government fondly hoped, against the warnings of those who understood the second nature which overgrows the first in the holders of irresponsible power, that the parents would, from the same hour, be morally and civilly free—bound only in the salutary obligations to virtuous labour. However that might be, the day was within view when all should be wholly free. To her great honour—and not

1834. the less because the act proved to be one of true policy—Antigua surrendered the right of apprenticeship, and set her slaves wholly free on the appointed day. Elsewhere, the arrangement worked so ill—the oppression of the negroes was so gross, and to them in their transition state so intolerable—the perplexities were so many, and so difficult to deal with—that Government was soon convinced that "gradualism" was as impracticable under the name of freedom as of slavery; in three years, the term of apprenticeship was shortened; and presently afterwards the arrangement was relinquished altogether.

The season of emancipation was dreaded by some of the slave-holders, who had spent all their lives in fear of negro risings. To others it appeared that the danger of revolt was when the negroes were suffering under tyranny, and not when they were relieved from it. On both shores of the Atlantic, however, expectation stood on tip-toe to watch the moment which should give freedom to 800,000 of the enslaved race. The Carolina planter looked well to his negro quarter, to see that his "hands" were not abroad after dark. Garrison and his band sat waiting for tidings—with more faith in the negro temper than any body else, but still with some anxiety for the cause. The British parliament looked benevolently forth, in the consciousness of having done an act which should stand alone in the history of the world. The British peasant thought affectionately of the black brethren whom he, as a freeman and a tax-payer, had helped to release from bondage. And when

1st of August, 1834.

the tidings came—the narrative of how the great day had passed over—there was such joy as is seldom excited by one event among opposite interests. Garrison and his band were as much relieved as the Carolina planter; and the English peasant was as proud and pleased as the British parliament.—The 1st of August fell on a Friday; and there was to be holiday from the Thursday night till Monday. The missionaries did their duty well; and they completely succeeded in impressing the people with a sense of the solemnity of the occasion. The arrival of that midnight in the island of Antigua, where the negroes were to be wholly free at once, was an event which cannot be read of without a throbbing of the heart. It was to the negroes their passover night. They were all collected in their chapels—the Wesleyans keeping

Thome and Kimball's 'Emancipation in the West Indies.'

watch-night in the chapels throughout the island. The pastors recommended to the people to receive the blessing in silence and on their knees. At the first stroke of midnight from the great cathedral bell, all fell on their knees, and nothing was heard but the slow tolling bell, and some struggling sobs in the intervals. The silence lasted for a few moments after the final stroke, when a peal of awful thunder rattled through the sky, and the flash of lightning seemed to put out the lamps in the chapels. Then the kneeling crowd sprang to their feet, and gave voice to their passionate emotions;—such voice as might be expected from this excitable people. Some tossed up their free arms, and groaned away at once the heart's burden of a life. Families and neighbours opened their arms to each other. Some prayed aloud, after the lead of their pastors, that they might be free indeed: and a voice was heard in thanksgiving for a real Sabbath now, when the wicked should cease from troubling, and the weary be at rest, and the voice of the oppressor should be no more heard, and the servant should be free from his master. In some of

1834. the chapels the noble spectacle was seen of the masters attending with their negroes, and, when the clock had struck, shaking hands with them, and wishing them joy. The rest of the holiday was spent partly in mirth, as was right, and much of it in listening to the addresses of the missionaries who urged upon them with much force, and in the utmost detail, the duties of sobriety and diligence, and harmony with their employers. On the Monday morning, they went to work—that work which they were proud of now, as it was for wages.

Fair as was this promise, and well as the conduct of the negroes has justified the highest expectations of their most sanguine friends, no reasonable persons were so sanguine as to suppose that all parties would be satisfied—that an Act of Parliament could neutralize all the evil results of an iniquity that was centuries old—that the striking of that cathedral clock was to silence all discontents for the future as well as the past. From the nature of things it could not be so. The planter could not, at the striking of that clock, put off his habits of command, and his life-long associations of inferiority with the negro race. He could not, in a moment, or a year, become an economist, a practical man, carrying on his business with the close attention and care and thrifty skill held necessary in the employers of free labour elsewhere. And the negroes would certainly work in a very different way, and to a very different amount henceforth. The husband and father might, and no doubt would, accomplish much more actual work between year's end and year's end: but some of it would be for himself—on ground of his own: and the women would be almost universally withdrawn from field-labour; and they would keep their children under their own care at home. As the possession of land was, in the eyes of negroes, the symbol of all earthly power and privilege, it was certain that their great ambition would be to buy land; and thus, again, more labour would be withdrawn from the existing estates. And these estates were in that bad state of tillage which always co-exists with slave labour; and the conditions were thus unfavourable to a change of system. The probability seemed to many to be that there would be a decline in the production of sugar, and distress among the planters, not remediable by any kind or degree of aid from England, ending probably in a transfer of the estates from the representatives of the old system to those of the new. A tone of fretful triumph would have to be borne with for a time from the enemies of emancipation; and perhaps a temporary deficiency of sugar—entailing further sacrifice on the English working classes who had so cheerfully undertaken their share of the twenty millions of compensation: and, in some future time, every white might have sold his plantation to a black or mulatto capitalist. There would be much evil in all this, if it should happen: but after so long and grievous a sin, some retributive penalty must be expected: and there were bright points both in the near and distant prospects. The negress was now under the protection of a husband, and had a home in which to labour and rest. Christianity could now be preached, without dread and without omission. While regretting any decline in the outward fortunes of the planters, no considerate person could for a moment put those outward fortunes into the scale against the moral and material interests of

1834. the vast majority of residents in the West Indies: and, as for the supply of sugar—there is a broad belt surrounding the world—here studded with South American ranchos, there feathered with African palms, and beyond, watered by the rivers of India, and strewn with the islands of the eastern archipelago—where sugar enough may be grown for the needs of the whole race. The centuries bring with them their own resources. Ours brought a rich one in the insight and impulse to extinguish a mighty sin. Necessity and justice were seen and heard to demand it: the thing was done: and necessity and justice may always be trusted to vindicate themselves.

CHAPTER IX.

1831.

THUS far the Whig Ministry had wrought and prospered well. They had undertaken their great works with a clear view of what ought to be done, and a determination to do it: or, if they at any time fell short in either of these requisites, the sympathy or opposition of the liberal party soon brought them up again. Among many deficiencies and weaknesses which they were now to exhibit, the most fatal, and one of the most inexcusable, was in regard to Ireland. It required no miraculous wisdom to see that Catholic Emancipation would not tranquillize Ireland while she suffered under the burden of what the *Times* called "too much Church." In the most orderly state of society in any country, it could not be expected that between six and seven millions of inhabitants of one religious faith would pay a portion of their produce to support a church which included only a few hundred thousands—a church which they conscientiously disapproved, and whose funds they saw to be ample, while their own priesthood had nothing to depend on but the precarious contributions of their flocks. On the one hand was a church numbering 853,000, with four archbishops, eighteen bishops, and a law which authorized its clergy to derive an essential part of their incomes from tithes; and this in a country where tillage was the almost universal means of subsistence, and the division of the land was so minute that the tithe-collectors seemed never to have done making their demands of shillings and half-pence. On the other hand, there was a church including six millions and a half of members, without aid from government, without countenance from the law; with a multitudinous priesthood who lived with the poor and like the poor; and from these poor was the tithe extorted by perpetually recurring applications—applications backed by soldiery and armed police, who carried off the pig, or the sack of potatoes, or the money-fee which the peasant desired to offer to his own priest. It required no miraculous wisdom to see that the long exasperated Irish must consider this management as religious persecution, and feel that Catholic Emancipation was not yet complete. A very ordinary foresight would have shown that it would soon be found impossible to collect tithe in Ireland; and further, that it must soon be acknowledged by the whole world at home, as it had long been declared by the whole world abroad, that the maintenance of the establishment in Ireland was an insult and injury which no nation could be expected to endure, and which must preclude all chance of peace till it should be abolished in its form of a dominant church. The Whig Ministers were not only without the miraculous wisdom, but they were without the ordinary foresight. They—Whigs as they were—were blinded by that same superstitious dread of changing the law which had, time after time, been the destruction of their opponents. They, Whigs as they were, seemed to have forgotten that no human law can be made for eternity—that no age or generation can

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bind down a future age or generation to its own arrangements, or legislate in a spirit of prophecy. They, whose ancestors had declared these truths in 1688, and as often since as any great reform had been needed:—they who had dissolved the laws which gave seats in parliament as a property to individuals, and the negro as a property to his white fellow-man, pleaded now, while Ireland was convulsed from end to end with the church question, that the church in Ireland could never be touched, because its establishment and revenues were guaranteed by law. If it was asked to whom were this establishment and these revenues guaranteed, it was necessary to dismiss the abstraction called the Church, and to reply either the worshippers or their clergy; and the question then was, whether means of worship could not be provided for the one, and an honourable subsistence for the other, by some method less objectionable than taking by force the tenth potatoe and the tenth peat from the Catholic peasant, and parading the Church of the small minority before the eyes of the vast majority as the pensioned favourite of the state. If the Whig ministers had had sagacity to see the untenable nature of the Irish Establishment, and courage to propose its reduction to the proper condition of a Protestant denomination, they would have gained honours even nobler than those which they won by Parliamentary Reform. It is highly probable that Ireland would have been by this time comparatively at ease; for the Ministers might apparently have carried such a measure at the outset of their legislation for Ireland, when their power was at its height, and the question of Church Reform in England was discussed with a freedom and boldness which soon disappeared. If not, however—if they had failed and gone out upon this question—they would have entitled themselves to the eternal gratitude of the nation, and of so much of the world at large as is interested in the interior peace and prosperity of the British empire. But they did not see nor understand their opportunity. The phantom of the impersonal Church, and its shadowy train of legal guarantees, was before them, so as to shut out the realities of the case—the substantial interests of the Protestant religion, and the weighty facts that many of the churches were empty, the numbers of Protestants stationary or decreasing, and the working clergy actually living upon alms. The Administration tried this and that and the other small method of dealing with the difficulty; at what expense of delay, contention, and ultimate partial yielding, we shall hereafter see. "Of this," said their friends at the time, by the most calm and moderate of their organs, "there can be no doubt;—the only way to afford her (the Irish Church) the least chance of a permanent existence, is to abolish Tithes entirely, and to cut down her other emoluments very low indeed,—that is to say, to reduce them until they amount to no more than a fair equivalent for the services which she can render in return for them."

Spectator, 1833, p. 59.

Prosecution of O'Connell.

In 1831, the state of Ireland seemed to be growing daily worse, in regard to violence. There was a conflict of forces between the Lord Lieutenant and Mr. O'Connell. The Lord Lieutenant issued proclamations against a certain order of public meetings. O'Connell and his friends disobeyed the proclamation, and were brought to trial. Delays and difficulties were introduced into the legal process, as is usual in Ireland; but the matter ended in O'Connell and his comrades pleading guilty to the first fourteen counts in the indictment,

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which charged them with holding meetings in violation of various proclamations. The Attorney-General was satisfied, and withdrew the remaining counts. Mr. O'Connell denied in the newspapers that he had pleaded guilty; and declared that he had allowed judgment to go by default, in order to plead before the House of Lords, through the twelve Judges—before which time, he hoped the Act under which he was prosecuted would expire. As it was asserted and proved in the House of Commons that he had actually pleaded guilty, and that nothing remained but for sentence to be pronounced against him, his followers, in their amazement at such a fall, resorted to the supposition that some kind of compromise had taken place between himself and the government, and that the Liberator had humbled himself in order to obtain some boon for Ireland. The supposition grew to a rumour; and the rumour spread to the friends and opponents of the Ministers in parliament: and, though it was promptly met, it was never again extinguished. Whether it was through indolence, carelessness, timidity, or temporary convenience, certain it was that the Whig government brought on itself, for a course of years, the charge of compromise with O'Connell, after repeated proofs of his utter unworthiness of all trust, and therefore of all countenance as the representative of his country. On the present occasion, Mr. Stanley, Secretary for Ireland, was questioned in the House about the transactions of Government with Mr. O'Connell; and his reply was express and clear. He would not say that Mr. O'Connell's friends had not endeavoured to make terms for him: but the reply of Government had been that Mr. O'Connell's conduct had not entitled him to any consideration, and "the law must take its course:"—"judgment should be pressed against him:"—the Crown had "procured a verdict against Mr. O'Connell; and it would, undoubtedly, call him up to receive judgment upon it." Within a fortnight after, a ridiculous scene took place in the House. Mr. O'Connell asked the Secretary for Ireland on what ground he had asserted that friends of his had endeavoured to make terms for him. "There could be no delicacy in disclosing their names, because, if they were accredited agents, he—on the supposition the principal—asked for publicity; and if they were not his agents, it was but common justice to hold them up as impostors." Again, Mr. Stanley's answer was express and clear. A letter had been laid before him which proposed terms, to induce the Irish Government to forego the prosecution, the letter being dictated by Mr. O'Connell himself to his son-in-law, and enclosed in one from his son. The House received this explanation with shouts of laughter: and the shouts were renewed when Mr. O'Connell said that "he could not but admit that his question had been answered most satisfactorily by the right honourable gentleman." The terms proposed were, as Mr. O'Connell now declared, that he should forego his agitation for the Repeal of the Union, which he regarded only as means to an end, if the Government would, in the first place, drop the prosecution, and next propose good measures for Ireland. "The answer was, that no such compromise would be for a moment entertained by the Irish Government, and that the law must take its course." It is difficult to account for a self-exposure so audacious as this of O'Connell, on any other supposition than that he wished to advertise his readiness to be negotiated with, and to surrender his Repeal agitation on sufficient inducement. He had long before so surrendered all

Hansard, ii. 491, 612.

Hansard, ii. 1006, 1007.

Hansard, ii. 1007.

1831. pretensions to honour, and shown himself so incapable of conceiving of honour, that he could go through a scene like this of the 28th of February, 1831, with less embarrassment than any other man. The misfortune of the case to the Government was, that it did not redeem the pledge given by Mr. Stanley. The law did not take its course; Mr. O'Connell was not brought up for judgment. Time passed on: the Act under which he was convicted expired: and when it was defunct, the Ministers considered that it would be ungracious to inflict the penalties it decreed.

Irish Outrage.

From week to week of this session, the outrages in Ireland grew worse. Tithe collectors were murdered in some places: in others, they were dragged from their beds, and laid in a ditch to have their ears cut off. Five of the police were shot dead at once by a party in ambush. The peasantry declared against pastures, and broke up grass lands in broad day. Cattle were driven off, lest the owners should pay tithe upon them. A committee of Roman Catholic priests, assembled at Ennis for the promotion of order and peace, broke up with expressions of despair. O'Connell attended some of the trials in May, before a special commission issued for the purpose; and he took the opportunity of making matters worse by addressing the people in speeches, in which he told them that many of the convicted peasants would have been acquitted if fairly tried, but that the juries were afraid to acquit. He charged his hearers with—not crime, but—indiscretion, and advised them to deliver up their arms, not because the law required it, but because they might thus mollify the Government, and purchase leniency for their comrades who had been caught. Towards the end of the month, there was a fight between the police and the peasants, at Castle Pollard, in Westmeath, on occasion of an attempted rescue. The chief constable was knocked down; the police fired, and nine or ten persons were killed. The police were tried for manslaughter, on the prosecution of the Government; and O'Connell found matter of complaint even in this, after the men were acquitted, alleging that the prosecutions would have been fairer, if left to be instituted by the families of the slaughtered men. If they had been so left, his complaints of the apathy of the Government would have been more formidable still. In June, an affair happened at Newtonbarry, in Wexford, which shows what was the position of the Church in the Catholic districts of Ireland at that time. On the 18th of June, which was market day, some cattle were to be sold which had been impounded for tithe payment. The following placard was on the walls of the town:—"Inhabitants, &c. &c. There will be an end of church plunder: your pot, blanket, and pig, will not hereafter be sold by auction, to support in luxury, idleness, and ease, persons who endeavour to make it appear that it is essential to the peace and prosperity of the country, and your eternal salvation, while the most of you are starving. Attend to an auction of your neighbour's cattle, seized for tithe by the Rev. Alexander M'Clintock." The yeomanry were on the alert to assist the police. As soon as the sale began, it merged into a fight; and twelve of the Catholic mob were killed. The consequent law proceedings were baffled and rendered fruitless by trick and timidity; but the affair was never forgotten. Before the year was out, the clergy had become afraid to ask, and their flocks to pay, their dues. As the year closed, soldiery assisted the police; but this only enlarged the area of the fights, and deepened their animosity. On one occasion, five of the

Annual Register, 1831, pp. 324, 5.

Catholics were shot dead by the military; and, a fortnight after, when a strong body of police were escorting a tithe-collector, they were summoned to surrender him to popular vengeance; and, on their refusal, twelve of them were slaughtered in a lane, and more left fearfully wounded. The captain of police and his son, ten years old, were among the slain; and the pony which the boy rode was stabbed dead. The arms of the assailants were scythes, pitchforks and bludgeons. A country lad, who appeared about thirteen years old, went from one to another of the prostrate police, and finding that five of them still breathed, made an end of them with his scythe. Such were the things that were done in the name, and for the alleged rights, of the religion which brought "peace on earth, and good-will to men." As for the reviled clergy,—the men who were declared to be living "in luxury, idleness, and ease," and whose claim to tithe the Irish Secretary was advocating in the House as "a matter of justice between man and man,"—they were living, some in fear of a prison for debt, as they had received no money for many months; many more in fear of their neighbours; and not a few in fear of seeing their children starve before their eyes. Sometimes there would come in by night a pig, or a bag of meal, or a sack of potatoes, from some pitying friend; and by day, the clergyman might be seen digging "for bare life" in his garden, with his shoeless children about him, while his wife was trying, within the house, whether the tattered clothes would bear another and another patch. Such was the system of "justice between man and man" which Mr. Stanley would not at this time touch, because it was legal. If this was justice, on every or any hand, what then was injustice?

Annual Register, 1831, p. 327.

Some clergymen, however, differed from Mr. Stanley about perseverance in not touching the tithe system, on account of its justice. The Archbishop of Dublin declared that he spoke the opinion of many of his clerical brethren, as well as his own, when he said, in his evidence before the Lords' Committee in this year—"As for the continuance of the tithe system, it seems to me that it must be at the point of the bayonet—that it must be through a sort of chronic civil war. The ill feelings that have so long existed against it have been embodied in so organized a combination, that I conceive there would be continually breakings out of resistance, which must be kept down by a continuance of very severe measures, such as the Government might indeed resolve to have recourse to for once, if necessary, but would be very unwilling to resort to habitually, so as to keep the country under military government. And the most intelligent persons, and the most experienced I have conversed with, seem to think that nothing else will permanently secure the payment of tithes under the present system." If this was true, tithes were condemned, in spite of their justice; for it could not be supposed that the preachers of a non-aggressive and non-resistant religion would desire to have their maintenance permanently collected at the point of the bayonet. There must, in that case, be more "anxious thought" about meat and clothing than consisted with their profession. Already, indeed, the two faiths in Ireland seemed to have exchanged characters. It was the Protestant Church which displayed its protected, and endowed, and dominant hierarchy; and it was the Catholic faith which sent its priests from house to house, to preach glad tidings to the poor, accepting subsistence from the overflow of good-will, but demanding nothing in the name of human law.

Hansard, x. 1277.

1832.

Royal Notice of Tithes.

In the royal speech, at the opening of the next session, some progress in Ministerial opinion was apparent. The King requested the parliament to consider whether some improvement could not be made in the law regarding tithes in Ireland. In after years, there was abundant cause for lamentation that the advance was so small. Committees of Inquiry were appointed by both Houses; and the evidence adduced was so astounding as to induce, in a multitude of minds, views of the Protestant Church in Ireland which it is lamentable that the Government did not take heed to and act upon. Many friends of Ireland, as well as the Catholics themselves, desired, if tithes were not to be abolished, that they should be so appropriated as to yield benefit to the body who paid them, by means of a recurrence to the first principles of tithes. Originally, one-fourth of the tithe was devoted to the maintenance of the poor, and another to that of the places of worship: and it was now proposed, even in petitions to parliament, that this application should be made of the proceeds of tithe and of the lands of the Church in Ireland. Lord Grey took the earliest opportunity of intimating that he should strenuously oppose any proposition which went to deprive the Church (that ever impersonal pleader!) "of her just rights." Perhaps the best expression of the widely awakened feeling we have adverted to may be found in the speech of Lord Ebrington, who had himself been on the committee in the Commons, "respecting the unfortunate anomaly which the Church of Ireland presented. He should not think any plan could lead to a final settlement of the question, which attempted to exclude the consideration of a thorough reform of the Church of Ireland. When he saw the clergy of that Church receiving salaries so disproportionate to the number of Protestants under their care; and when he saw that those salaries were paid chiefly by Roman Catholics, he looked upon the system as pregnant with injury to the cause of religion. He protested, therefore, against the number of the clergy being so disproportioned to their congregations; and he should be glad to see some more just distribution of the revenues of the Church, such as would afford a more adequate provision for the working clergy; and he should also be glad to see a state of things in which no part of the revenues of the Church should be diverted from the use of the Church. He could think no settlement of the existing complaints satisfactory which, with a due regard to all existing interests—for God forbid that they should attempt to strip any man of that which of right belonged to him—did not contemplate the reduction of the Church of Ireland to a condition better proportioned to the wants of the Protestant inhabitants." Such was the view brought out of Committee by as thorough-going a friend of the Whig administration as sat in the House.

Hansard, x. 3.

Hansard, x. 1354.

There was now no time to be lost. The Irish recusants knew, to a man, that the royal speech had recommended to parliament a consideration of the tithe system: and they took this for a royal condemnation of tithe-paying. They knew before February was out that the parliamentary committees had reported that nothing would avail short of "a complete extinction of tithes" by commutation for a charge upon the land: and these things were considered warrant enough for a refusal to pay tithe at all, and for persecution of those who did pay. An archdeacon in the neighbourhood of Cashel hoped to establish a commutation with his parishioners; but now they refused his terms, came up to him in a field in sight of his own house—a field where several

Annual Register, 1832, p. 282.

persons were ploughing, who took no notice of the transaction—and stoned him till his head was beaten to pieces. If any resident, pressed by his pastor, or by conscience, or by fear of the law, paid the smallest amount of tithe in the most secret manner, his cattle were houghed in the night, or his house was burnt over his head, or his flock of sheep was hunted over a precipice, and lay a crushed heap in the morning. There was a sound of a horn, at that time, which made men's flesh creep, whether it was heard by night or day; for those who took upon them to extinguish tithes now boldly assembled their numbers by the sound of the horn; and all who heard it knew that murder or mutilation or arson was going to be perpetrated. Captures, special commissions, and trials, were useless. Witnesses dared not give evidence: jurors dared not attend. Magistrates and police were multiplied; but the thing needed was a removal of the grievance, which was real enough, however atrociously avenged. On the very chapels, notices were now posted by the insurgents, and no man dared to take them down. There was indeed no time to lose.

Annual Register, 1832, p. 281.

The clergy naturally ceased to demand their dues: but even those of them who had any thing to live upon found that they were not to be left in peace. It seemed to be intended to drive them from the country. If they had cows, nobody could be found to milk them. Tradesmen who supplied articles to clergymen found that nobody would buy of them, or even sell to them. Throughout the Catholic rural districts of Ireland, the clergy were dependant now upon the government, or upon private charity, for mere sustenance, while large county meetings in Carlow, Cork, and elsewhere, were passing resolutions and issuing addresses which were almost alike in matter and form, and of which the following is a fair specimen:—"Resolved, that it is a glaring wrong to compel an impoverished Catholic people to support in pampered luxury the richest clergy in the world—a clergy from whom the Catholics do not experience even the return of common gratitude—a clergy who in times past opposed to the last the political freedom of the Irish people, and at the present day are opposed to reform and a liberal scheme of education for their countrymen. That ministers of the God of Charity should not, by misapplication of all the tithes to their own private uses, thus deprive the poor of their patrimony—nor should ministers of peace adhere with such desperate tenacity to a system fraught with dissension, hatred, and ill-will." The grievance was real enough—obvious to all who were not blinded by a superstitious worship of man-made law, so as to be insensible to those ulterior laws which it is impious to disregard. There was indeed no time to lose: but unhappily, there was no man in power free and bold enough broadly to assert the higher laws; and thus the lower was not withdrawn, but only feebly mended; so that the change was found ineffectual. The work had to be done over again; and the chief part of it—the reduction of the Protestant Church to the needs of the Protestant population—has to be done yet, while Ireland appears as far from being tranquillized as ever.

Cork Resolutions, 1832.

The Act which bears date June 1st 1832, authorizes the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland to advance 60,000*l.* to the Irish clergy who could prove themselves unable to collect their tithes for the year 1831. Their claims for that year thus became a debt from the Irish people to the government, recoverable by

FIRST ACT OF 1832. 2 Will. IV. c. 41.

1832. the powers of government. The claim of the clergy to any former arrears was not to be prejudiced by this Act, which was designed for temporary relief, and to interpose the government between the irritated people and the clergy. The government was to levy the arrears. Many in the House asked at once whether the government would be able to levy the arrears—defeated as it had been in endeavouring to aid the clergy to do so. The Bill was proffered under a pledge from government that a tithe commutation should be instituted, which alone could justify the temporary measure of an advance to the clergy. The Act passed rapidly through both Houses, and became law on the 1st of June. It was July before the further and permanent measures of government regarding tithes were brought forward; and, as the Minister declared, the session was too far advanced to admit of the passage of them all. They were three. The first rendered the existing Tithe Composition Act permanent and compulsory, instead of voluntary, and for a term of twenty-one years. The second constituted the bishop and beneficed clergy of every diocese a corporation for the management of tithe business, whereby individual clergymen would be relieved from the difficulties and dissensions attendant on a prosecution of their own claims. The corporation would levy and distribute the tithe for the diocese. The third provided for the redemption of the tithe by all who might wish to buy up their freedom from the charge. Sixteen years' purchase was the amount proposed; and permission was to be given to possessors of mortgaged and entailed estates to mortgage them further, in the first case, to the extent necessary for this object—such mortgage to have precedence of all that existed before; and, in the other case, to sell as much of the entailed estates as should be necessary for the redemption of the tithe.

Hansard, xiv. 100—109.

This last and most important of the three Bills was left over to the next session. It was the wish of Ministers to carry the other two; but they succeeded only with the first;—the Act by which the Tithes Composition in Ireland was made compulsory and permanent.

2 & 3 Will. IV. c. 119.

The Relief Act would not work. The clergy were as much hated as ever for giving in to the government an account of the arrears of 1831. A clergyman in Tipperary was shot dead on his own lawn. The son of another and his driver were left on the highway—the one dead, the other supposed to be so. The people would not permit the posting of notices of arrears; and in the affrays caused in this process, several lives were lost at different points; and this furnished occasion to O'Connell for cries for vengeance for the Irish blood that was shed; cries which told with prodigious effect. It had been clear to many from the first that this was a game at which government could not play. Defeat, and victory by force of soldiery, were equally fatal. The issue was defeat. Towards the end of the next session, the avowal of Ministers in parliament was that out of a sum of 104,285*l.* of arrears due for 1831, government had been able to levy only 12,000*l.*: and that amount "had been collected with great difficulty, and some loss of life." Government had decided to abandon all processes under the existing law, and to seek reimbursement in some other form, after having paid to the clergy the arrears of 1832, and the amounts due in the present year; which, together with those of 1831, now reached the sum of about a million. This amount of a million was to be provided by an issue of Exchequer Bills. This sum supposed a deduction from

Annual Register, 1832, p. 296.

Hansard, xx. 342.

1833.

the claims of the clergy, for the advantage of secure and immediate payment. The reimbursement was to be by means of a general land-tax for a term of years; exemption being granted to those who could prove that they had paid their tithes. These propositions were warmly debated. The Conservatives condemned all concession, and claimed for the Church and clergy the uttermost farthing of their dues. The Irish members condemned the levy of tithe in any form, declared that the government was now regarded as a great tithe-proctor, and hated accordingly; and foretold a repetition, with aggravation, of the outrages of preceding years, on every attempt to levy the land-tax. Many of the liberal party, who yet would not desert the government, complained of the issue of the million under the name of a loan, when every body knew that it would not prove recoverable, and would be in fact a gift to the Irish Church which they had no inclination to make. The Conservatives yielded, from pity and respect for the suffering clergy: the Liberals from a dislike to embarrass the government: and the Irish members could make no head against so many adversaries. The Bill for collecting the arrears of tithes therefore passed the Lords on the 28th of August, 1833.

Act of 1833. Hansard, xx. 895.

The next year, the subject had to be brought up again. There was infinite mischief in this annual debating on a topic so charged with irritation to all parties: and now, at this late day, came out some facts which, if they had been understood earlier, as they ought to have been, would have convinced so large a majority of the insufferable irksomeness of the imposition of tithe in Ireland, as to have ensured its being got rid of long ago. Mr. Littleton was now Secretary for Ireland: and he made his disclosures, and rendered his account on the 20th of February.

1834.

On the 4th of that month, the King's Speech had recommended a consideration of "a final adjustment of tithes" in Ireland: and in his remarks on the motion for the Address, the Duke of Wellington had said, that the Irish clergy were in precisely the same miserable situation at present that they had been in before the passage of measures for their relief; and he considered that "that most deserving race of men" was in danger of utter destruction: a statement which was not contradicted by Lord Grey in his reply to the Duke's speech. After two years of experiment and debate, the Irish Secretary was now compelled to call the attention of Parliament to a new measure: but it was to be four years yet before this single point was settled. At the outset of his speech, Mr. Littleton made an avowal which might prudently have been taken to heart before, so as to save years of "chronic civil war," much misery of mind, and the loss of many lives. Mr. Littleton begged the House "to bear in mind, that the statute-book had been loaded with enactments by the legislatures of both countries for the purpose of giving the proprietors of tithes effectual means to enforce the law. The whole of those enactments had proved ineffectual. Many of them of the most severe description, extending even to capital punishment, had proved utterly useless." No one could wonder at this who heard the statement that followed of the vexatious incidence of the Irish tithe. Owing to the extreme subdivision of land, the amounts were small—sometimes literally beyond expression; and in such cases, the debtor was one who had no money, or ready means of payment, and to whom it was exasperating to be called on, from time to time, for a religious

Hansard, xxi. 15.

Hansard, xxi. 573.

Tardy Truth about Tithes.

1834. tax, so paltry, and yet so inconvenient and so hurting to his conscience. In a parish in Carlow, the sum owing by 222 defaulters was a farthing each. "A return of the actual number of defaulters whose debts were under a farthing, and rise by farthings up to a shilling, would exhibit a very large proportion of the gross number. In some instances, the charge upon the land amounted to only seven parts of a farthing. When he informed the committee that many of the smaller sums were payable by three or four persons, some idea might be formed of the difficulty of collecting tithes in Ireland. The highest aggregate charge was against those who owed individually about *2d.*; and he would then beg to remind the committee, that it was not so much the sum as the situation of the individual, that rendered these charges oppressive. Two pence to one might be as great an impost as *2l.* to another. There was another great severity connected with the question of tithes. They were not simple. One proprietor alone did not come to the poor man to demand his tithes; but many, whose interests were irreconcileable and adverse, fastened upon him. There were different kinds of tithes—the vicarial, rectorial, and impropriate—all often fastening on the same individual, who was bound to meet the separate demands of each tithe-owner. The opposition to tithes, then, though it might receive an impulse from agitation, was not to be wholly traced to that source. There was a deeper source in the severity of the impost itself." This was all very true: the disaster was, that it had not been known sooner. Such had been the state of the case during preceding years of legislation; during years when the Irish were called purely ungrateful because the Emancipation Act did not tranquillize them. A quieter procedure on their part would have been wiser and more virtuous; but there was also little wisdom in the expectation that quietness would rise up and spread among an excitable and long-injured people while a grievance like this was ignored by a government which called itself liberal, and friendly to Ireland. Now that the Ministers had at last discovered that they had grievance, as well as agitation, to deal with, the method in which they proposed to deal with it was this:—that all compositions for tithes should cease from the 1st of next November: and that the amount should be paid in the form of an annual land-tax to the King, who should cause provision to be made out of it, in land or money, for the clergy and other tithe-owners. This land-tax was to be redeemable. Mr. O'Connell, and other members from Ireland, vehemently opposed this proposal, reasonably alleging that it would merely establish the same impost under another name. They did not succeed now in delaying the introduction of the Bill: but on the 30th of July, when it was in committee, Mr. O'Connell had his revenge for the moment. He objected to the proposal that government should recover the amount of the tithes; said that they would never succeed in taming the Irish people by pretending to throw salt on the tails of the landlords; and moved that the tithes should be made payable immediately from the landlords to the clergy, after being reduced forty per cent. This motion was in the form of an amendment to the third clause of the Bill: and it was carried by a very large majority; the numbers being 82 to 33.

Hansard, xxi. 578.

Hansard, xxi. 591.

PROPOSED ACT OF 1834.

Hansard, xxi. 771.

After taking time to consider, the Ministers determined to go on with the Bill. They never would have proposed a large reduction in the incomes of the Irish clergy: but as the House of Commons had declared itself broadly in favour of such a reduction, and it would facilitate the settling of the system, they could have no objection. And they believed that the clergy (to whom individually the reduction would be only twenty-two and a-half per cent.) would be willing and thankful to receive that amount, in consideration of the security, punctuality, and peaceableness, which would now attend the payments. The Lord Chancellor put it to the Peers, when the Bill came before them, whether any one of them deriving a nominal income of 100,000*l.* from his estates, would not be very glad to receive in gold, on a certain day, without a chance of disappointment, 77,500*l.*, with a release from all disputes, pains, and penalties, from bad or impoverished tenants. If their own bishops were to be believed, however, the great majority of the Irish clergy were hostile to the measure. In that case—if they were still able and disposed to stand out, under the risk of Irish outrage, for the full hire of their spiritual service—the compassion of parliament was thrown away upon them, and that of the nation must be reserved for the suffering minority of the clergy, who were ready to sacrifice something for peace, and to avoid causing their brother to offend. But even these more high-minded sufferers were not to be aided yet. On the motion for the second reading in the Lords, Lord Ellenborough moved that the Bill should be read that day six months, and threw it out by a majority of 67 out of 311 votes, by proxy or present. The bishops who were in favour of the measure were those of Derry, Chichester, and Norwich. On the other side were the Archbishops of Canterbury and Cashel, and nineteen bishops. The division showed that the spiritual peers were quite of Lord Melbourne's opinion (which was earnestly expressed), as to the unspeakable importance of the measure; only they took an opposite view of it. It was but for a short time; for within five years they had to yield: and meanwhile, their conduct, whether attributed to pride, to greed, to enmity to the Catholic Irish, or merely to such narrowness of view as ill becomes legislators, went as far to impair the dignity and influence of the Church among those who watched the case, as their success in throwing out the Reform Bill three years before.

Bill Lost.
Hansard, xxi. 1204.

Thus ended in failure the endeavour of the Whig administration to deal with the Irish tithe question; a difficulty so radical as to require radical treatment, as has been since practically acknowledged. The effect of merely tampering with it was very disastrous:—the government was foiled; the clergy sank into a deeper slough of popular hatred; and the Irish Church lost every year more of its dignity in the eyes of its own well-wishers.

The great question of its preservation in any form had now for some time been discussed; and so discussed that it was necessary for the administration of the time—whatever it might be—to take up the argument. Every body knew that the chief incitement to the Repeal agitation was the hope of getting rid of the Church. The Tories were disposed to defy the Repeal cry, and all agitation, and to uphold the dues of the Church even to the last penny of church-cess, and the smallest fraction of a farthing of tithe. A large number of the Liberal party were for so abating the Irish Church as to throw its maintenance upon its own members, and reduce its ministers to some proportion to their flocks. The endeavour of the administration was to keep a middle course between these extreme parties. In 1833, the government proposed to empower a Board of Ecclesiastical Commissioners, by Act of Parliament, to

Irish Ecclesiastical Commission.

1834.

make extensive changes in the Irish Church, which, it was hoped, would be so manifestly for the advantage of all parties as to secure a sufficient support in parliament.

Political Dictionary, i. 854.

Irish Census.

It appears, by a census purposely taken in 1834, that the proportion of the numbers of the Protestant Church in Ireland to that of Catholics and Dissenters was this:—The Catholics were 6,436,060: the members of the Established Church were 853,160: and the Dissenters, 665,540: that is, while the Catholics were above 80 per cent., the Church Protestants were just above 10, and the Dissenters 8, per cent. The revenues of this Church were 865,525*l.*: above 1*l.* per head of its members! There were nearly 1400 benefices—of which forty-one did not contain a single Protestant; twenty had under five, and 165 contained under five-and-twenty. In 157 benefices, no service was performed, the incumbent being an absentee. There were four archbishops and eighteen bishops for this little flock. It was impossible that such a Church could long be endured in a country so peopled; and the reductions now proposed by government were very considerable.

Hansard, xv. 567—576.

Reductions.

Two archbishops and ten bishops were to be the last of their name. Their dioceses were to be united with others as opportunity arose: and on the death of the Primate, the income of his see was to be reduced from 14,500*l.* to 10,000*l.* Deans and chapters were no longer to enjoy dignity without work. They were to be abolished, or to undertake the cure of souls. Sinecure benefices were to be endured no longer: the Commissioners might suspend the appointment of ministers who had not done duty for three years before. The First-fruits, which were a trouble and grievance producing little return, were to be abolished, and replaced by a tax on benefices and episcopal incomes, rising in its per centage from the smallest benefice not under 200*l.* a-year, to the vast incomes of some of the bishops; the humble livings paying five per cent.; and any episcopal income exceeding 1,500*l.* a-year, fifteen per cent. It was expected that by the sum thus raised (about 69,000*l.* a-year), a sufficient provision would be secured for the repair of churches and conducting of the service, so that the odious impost of church-cess might be abolished, its amount being estimated at 70,000*l.* a-year. The one remaining point was that which occasioned the fiercest disputes; disputes which lasted for a course of years, and are certainly destined to be renewed hereafter. In opening the scheme of government for altering (to the advantage of all other parties, without injury to the clergy) the terms for letting the lands of the Church, Lord Althorp did not conceal his opinion that any additional funds accruing from such change of management were fairly to be considered state funds, applicable to general state purposes. Supposing the Church left where she was before—deprived of nothing present or future—the profits of any improvement suggested and achieved by the government might be claimed by the government for the good of the state. The amount anticipated from this source was about, or nearly, three millions.

Appropriation Doctrine.

The government were anxious to lose no time "under existing circumstances," in carrying this Bill. It was brought in on the 11th of March. There was debate about the time of the second reading, and one of those mistakes to which the present Ministry seemed to be doomed; so that a delay of many weeks ensued. This was a tax-bill; and it was necessary to introduce

Hansard, xvi. 647.

Delays.

it in a committee of the whole House: and thus, as the point had to be argued, the Ministers to be convicted of error, and the whole matter gone over again, it was the 6th of May before it reached the second reading. It was then very nearly dismissed a second time on account of an oversight of Ministers in reciting a message from the King which had never been delivered to parliament: but the Speaker decided that the objectors should have brought forward their point before the first reading, and must now wait till the Bill was in committee, by which time the necessary message from the King might be received. The majority on this occasion was large in favour of the measure—many members, however, giving notice that they should ultimately oppose it, unless it was decided in committee that all accruing funds whatsoever should be devoted to ecclesiastical purposes. It was in vain that government explained that the fund from new church leases should be applied to educational and other objects which ought to be those of the Church. That provision was expunged from the Bill in Committee. It was also decreed that the tax on clerical incomes should date only from the death of the present incumbents. With these alterations, the Bill passed the Lower House, on the 8th of July, 1833, by a majority of 274 to 94;—a proportion which shows how much stronger was the apprehension of danger from Ireland than the cry, loud as it was, about confiscation of the property of the Church.

APPROPRIATION REFUSED.

Hansard, xix. 301.

The Peers were believed to intend to make a vigorous rally against this very important Bill, with whose passage the existence of the Ministry was understood to be bound up. On a recent occasion, when the Reform Bill had been in danger, a well-timed vote of the Commons of confidence in Ministers had been found of service; and it was now proposed again to intimate to the Peers that the Commons had a very decided will in regard to the reformation of the Irish Church. Sir J. Wrottesley, after due notice, and in opposition to the entreaties of Ministers, moved for a call of the House on the 17th of July—the day of the second reading in the Lords; and he was nearly successful;—125 voting with him, and 160 against him.

Hansard, xix. 662.

The opposition in the Lords was strong, but not effectual. The support given to the measure was somewhat grudging; but it was sufficient—no doubt for the reason assigned, in a few remarkable words, by the Earl of Wicklow for his share in carrying the Bill through. "He could not be taken to be a supporter of Ministers, because he meant to vote for their present measure. He conceived that every act of theirs bore upon it the stamp of revolution—the present no less than others: but he would for that very reason vote for the present Bill, because, if he did not, he might on a future occasion—like him with the books of the Sibyl—have to pay a higher price for less value." The Duke of Wellington, who had more reason than most men to know what to dread from Irish discontent, supported the Bill, on condition of certain amendments: and all went well, except that Ministers were outvoted on the point of the disposal of the revenues of suspended appointments. By a majority of two it was decided that such revenues should be applied to the repairs of the church and glebe-house; and then, any surplus should go into the hands of the commissioners. After consideration, Lord Grey and his colleagues determined not to throw up the Bill for the sake of this one point. It passed, on the 30th of July, by a majority of 54, out of 216 votes, and in the midst of a

Hansard, xix. 761.

IRISH CHURCH TEMPORALITIES BILL PASSES.

1834. vigorous recording of protests by alarmed Peers. Of these protests, the most remarkable one is that of the Duke of Cumberland, who reverts to the old Hansard, xx. 127. ground—by that time forgotten by every one else—of the Coronation Oath, of which he declares this measure a clear violation. The commissioners appointed under the Bill were the Primate of Ireland and Archbishop of Dublin, the Lord Chancellor and Chief Justice of Ireland, and four of the Irish bishops. Their powers were great; and it was confidently hoped that they would be put to vigorous use. But no one supposed that any thing that they could do would finally settle the difficulty of the Irish Church: and it would be so long before the relief of their measures could be practically felt, that much might happen meantime.

Though the state of Ireland was less disturbed, in the course of a few months, the agitation for repeal went on so vigorously that the royal speech made express reference to it at the opening of the session of 1834, and both Houses of Parliament replied in a special address;—it being well understood by all parties that the Church grievance supplied the whole body and spirit of the agitation. Men who agreed that the fact was so were far from agreeing as to what should be done: and none differed more irreconcileably than the members of the cabinet; as events presently showed.

Official Changes.

In the preceding year, Mr. Stanley had ceased to be Irish Secretary, having entered the cabinet as Colonial Secretary, when Lord Goderich became Earl of Ripon, with the office of Lord Privy Seal. It was at that time that Mr. Littleton (since Lord Hatherton) became Irish Secretary, and entered upon the warfare which his office imposed upon any one compelled daily to hold a sort of Conservative ground against Mr. O'Connell and his friends in the House. Towards Mr. Stanley the Irish members had been to the last degree fierce; and he was not of a temper to keep the peace under provocation, or so made as to conceal the disgust and contempt from which he has ever appeared to suffer, as from a chronic malady, all the days of his life. What the Colonies might have to say to the change would be known in due course: meantime, it was a comfort to the Ministers to see a good-tempered man, who seemed to be liked by the Irish members, in the place of one who was so vehemently hated by them. The difference of opinion in the cabinet about the power of the state over any new revenues of the Irish Church, was of less consequence, as the chief of the minority—who called such a doctrine a plan of confiscation—was now occupied with colonial affairs. The difference might for some time longer have caused nothing more serious than preparatory discussion, but for the subject of the Irish Church being brought up by Mr. Ward, member for St. Alban's, on the 27th of May, in a motion for the reduction of its establishment, as it exceeded the spiritual wants of the Protestant population; and as it is the right of the state to regulate the distribution of Church property, in such manner as parliament may determine. The motion was seconded by Mr. Grote, one of the members for London, who had scarcely begun to address the House when Lord Althorp received some information which induced him, at the close of Mr. Grote's speech, to request the House to adjourn the debate from the present Tuesday to the Monday following. On this question—of the right of the state over any proceeds of Church property—the administration could not bear a touch. The news which had reached

Mr. Ward's Critical Motion. Hansard, xxiii. 1396.

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Lord Althorp was that the leaders of the minority in the cabinet—Mr. Stanley and Sir James Graham—had resigned. They had hurried on their court dresses, and gone to the King, to surrender office. Their example was immediately followed by Lord Ripon and the Duke of Richmond. The single Tory, and two "Canningites," were now gone; and the Ministry, being wholly Liberal—or supposed to be so—could henceforth work more freely. Such was the speculation in the House of Commons, in Lombard-street, and in Ireland. Lord Auckland went to the Admiralty; Mr. Spring Rice to the Colonial Office; and the Privy Seal was held by Lord Carlisle. Mr. Poulett Thomson at the same time became President, instead of Vice-President, of the Board of Trade; and the Marquess of Conyngham succeeded the Duke of Richmond at the Post Office.

The opponents of a liberal policy knew what was the weakest point of the administration:—of this administration, as of several that had preceded;—the timidity and deficient ability of the King. They lost no time in attacking this weak point. The day after the debate had been so strangely interrupted was the King's birth-day festival; and the Irish bishops went up to the throne with an address, signed most numerously by Irish prelates and clergy, deprecating changes in the establishment. Whether the King's mind was over full of the subject before, so as to flow out at the first touch of his feelings, or whether any circumstance at the moment tempted him away from the ordinary practice in replying to such addresses, there is no saying; but he poured out a set of sentiments, ideas, and promises, which placed himself and his government in a position of great embarrassment, and grievously aggravated the prevalent excitement. This extraordinary speech began with the words, "I now remember you have a right to require of me to be resolute in defence of the Church." The King went on to assure the eagerly listening clergy that the Church of England and Ireland should be preserved unimpaired by him: and that if any of the inferior arrangements in the discipline of the Irish Church required amendment, "which, however, he greatly doubted," he hoped it would be left to the bishops to correct them, without interference on any hand. He was completing his sixty-ninth year, and must prepare to leave the world with a conscience clear in regard to the maintenance of the Church." "I have spoken more strongly than usual," he said in conclusion, with tears running down his cheeks, "because of unhappy circumstances that have forced themselves upon the observation of all. The threats of those who are enemies of the Church make it the more necessary for those who feel their duty to that Church to speak out. The words which you hear from me are, indeed, spoken by my mouth, but they flow from my heart." He had, somewhat unnecessarily, assured his hearers that his speech was not a prepared one, got by heart, but uttered from the feeling of the moment. As such an indiscretion must be infinitely embarrassing to his Ministers, the utmost pains were taken to scatter this speech through the country without the delay of an hour, that the House of Commons and the Ministers might be overawed before the renewal of the debate on Mr. Ward's motion, the next Monday.

Annual Register, 1834, p. 43.

King's Declaration.

Meantime, the Ministers did not resign. They had had experience before of the weakness of the King, and did not think it right to give up the country to be governed by the leaders of the minority, under a sovereign who could not

1834. help agreeing with the last speaker, and who was always impetuous on behalf of his latest impression. The Ministers did not resign; but the general conviction of their insecurity in office was so strong that Mr. Ward declined to withdraw his motion, saying that the assertion of its principle was made doubly important by the probability that men would presently be in power who would need such a check from the legislature. Spectator, 1834, p. 508. During the week, it had become known that Lord Grey had declared that he had neither nerve nor spirits for the vigorous reconstruction of the Cabinet; and that his predominant wish—to have Lord Durham there—had been overborne by the Lord Chancellor and Lord Lansdowne. Two addresses to the Premier had been presented on the part of members of the House of Commons:—the one, a declaration of confidence in Lord Grey; the other, prepared after the intrigues in the Cabinet had become known, expressive of dissatisfaction at the discountenance of popular principles in the new appointments. The Ministerial papers themselves openly warned the nation that the government was only "patched up," to get through the session; and that, before the year was out, unless the matter were looked to in time, the nation would be at the mercy of the Court, which was itself in the hands of the Church.

Under such circumstances, Mr. Ward refused to withdraw his motion. He Hansard, xxiv. 21. was probably aware that Mr. Hume was about to quote a letter from Lord Anglesea to the Premier, in which he insisted on a large reform of the Church as absolutely essential to the peace of Ireland; and he could quote as a sanction Hansard, xv. 574. to his motion the words of Lord Althorp himself, a few months before—"if by any act of the legislature new value can be given to any property belonging to the Church, that new value will not properly belong to the Church, because it is an acquisition dependent on such act of the legislature, and may be appropriated immediately to the use of the state." Mr. Ward's anxiety was to reassert this principle; and pitiable was the position of Lord Althorp, if he was really about to evade that declaration of his own. His position was pitiable. He was wont to say, with his good-humoured smile, that it was hard upon him to force him to be a statesman, when nature had made him a grazier: and the lot was doubly hard which threw him into a Cabinet where there was no power of will, no enlightened union, no combined working faculty, to sustain the efficiency and dignity of the government when the *appui* of popular will and popular dictation was withdrawn. Lord Grey was aged, worn, and weary: Lord Lansdowne was for taking a middle course, and evading difficulties, on all occasions whatever. Mr. Stanley had aggravated all existing difficulties and created many new ones by his porcupine demeanour: and the whole administration was kept in perpetual hot water by the intrigues and indiscretions of the Lord Chancellor. Thus disunited among themselves, struggling in a slough of difficulties, where no one could help another, and the people withdrawing from them further and further every day, they contradicted themselves and each other, gave pledges, and forgot or dropped them, strove in the first place always to evade difficulties which they had not faculty or influence to overcome, had long lost their popularity, and stood a spectacle of weakness to the weak sovereign himself. Thus, Lord Althorp's position on the evening of the 2nd of June was truly a pitiable one.

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Commission of Inquiry.

By prodigious exertion, a plan for a Commission of Inquiry respecting the Irish Church had been framed, and commissioners found, by the Monday morning. In the afternoon, a Council of the supporters of the Cabinet was held in Downing-street, at which the procedure of the evening was determined on. Mr. Ward was to be out-voted at any risk, as his success would bring on a decision of the perilous question about Church property, cause the dissolution of the Ministry, and, no doubt, a general election, in which the Church and State question would be the watch-word. The supporters of the Ministry knew that their constituents were in a mood which it would not be pleasant to encounter; and they were thankful to learn that government had provided a means of escape from either affirming or denying Mr. Ward's principle.

When they went to the House, they found it surrounded by a crowd, and so filled that it was difficult for them to make their way to their seats. Mr. Ward's speech was brief, courteous, but firm. Lord Althorp then announced the intention of the government to issue a Special Commission of Inquiry, composed of laymen, which should visit every parish in Ireland, and report its population, under the heads of the three religions, its spiritual provisions, and its ecclesiastical revenues. The Church party regarded the measure as merely a preparation for "confiscation;" and the Liberals saw no occasion for further evidence on a point of fact which was undisputed, while the principle which was the point of dispute was passed over in silence, and nothing gained by this device but more time for the government to shuffle on. Lord Althorp declared that the Commission was in fact already issued; that he saw no necessity for parliament to pronounce on the principle of Mr. Ward's motion, and that he should move the previous question. This he did, and obtained an overwhelming majority;—of 276 in a house of 516. Hansard, xxiv. 13. Hansard, xxiv. 86.

In the other House, the Premier had to run the gauntlet between the lines of objectors to the new Commission: and there really was no good answer to give to the complaint that the Ecclesiastical Commission of the preceding year had been agreed to on the supposition of its being a final measure; and that no one had dreamed of its being overridden by another Commission, before it had had time to show how it would do its work. The true answer to this would have been that the Ministers were as far from dreaming of such a thing as any body else, till recent perplexities had put it into their heads. From this moment, the Ministers were incessantly called on for explanations of their views on this great subject of the appropriation of Church revenues by the State; and on different occasions they expressed themselves with varying degrees of explicitness. On the 23rd of June, Mr. O'Connell moved an instruction to the Committee on the Tithe bill, that whatever surplus remained, after the wants of the Protestant Church were duly provided for, should be applied to purposes of general utility—which he explained to mean, not the making of roads and bridges, but purposes of charity and of education, in whose benefits the needy of all faiths should share alike. On this occasion, Lord John Russell and Lord Althorp declared their agreement with Mr. O'Connell, if the ground were taken that these purposes were of a religious character, leaving open the question whether such funds could be applied—by not only legal right, for that was clear, but by moral and equitable right—to secular purposes. The question was thus transferred to a new ground—the Hansard, xxiv. 753. 801.

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shaking bog of metaphysics, on which it would be for ever impossible for any legislature to decide and act. It is no subject for legislation whether charity and education are religious or secular works; nor can it be settled whether parliament, having a clear legal right to dispose of any funds, must have a proved moral and equitable right also; nor how a moral and equitable right is provable, or even assignable, otherwise than by affirming or repealing the legal right. The only thing clear was that nothing could be actually done in the matter, for the relief of the Irish Catholics, and the satisfaction of the discontented throughout the kingdom, while the war was one of metaphysical distinctions.

The whole bearing and importance of this question in 1834 can hardly be understood without taking a view of the condition of religion and the Church in England at that date. This will presently come before us, when we shall have to show what were the views and aims of the Whig Administration in this direction. The story of what they achieved during their present term of office is nearly concluded: and we see them now in a position of perplexity and weakness which it is clear they could not long maintain. They must obtain more strength or sink.

Coercion Bill.

In the preceding year, a Bill had been passed which conferred extraordinary powers on the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, for putting down the fearful disturbances of that country. Among the provisions of that Bill were two of eminent importance: that of suspending the ordinary course of justice in favour of martial law; and of prohibiting political meetings and discussions. The Bill was reported by the Irish authorities to have worked well; and to the Premier's mind it was clear that it ought to be renewed on its expiration in August, 1834, with the omission only of the portion relating to martial law. To others, however, the expediency was not so clear: and it appears that the same want of confidence between the members of the government, or other causes of disunion, existed in regard to this as to other measures; for it is scarcely possible to doubt, among much conflicting evidence, that up to a certain day, it was not the intention of government to renew the Coercion Bill entire, except as to martial law, but to leave out that portion relating to public meetings which most exasperated the wrath of Mr. O'Connell. Mr. Littleton, the Irish secretary, certainly relied upon this; and he sent for Mr. O'Connell to assure him of this agreeable prospect, hoping, as Mr. Littleton himself avowed, to deter O'Connell from agitating on occasion of the pending Wexford election. The communication was made under the seal of secrecy. It is hard to know whether to wonder most at the simplicity which supposed that O'Connell was to be trusted with a political secret, or at the folly of imagining that political secrets of such weight can be kept, except among confederates. Mr. O'Connell explained how he conceived himself relieved from obligation to secrecy, and revealed the awkward fact that Mr. Littleton had told him that the Irish government was opposed to the renewal of the Coercion Bill. The Agitator had immediately caused the Repeal candidate for Wexford to retire; and, when it was too late, he received a message from Mr. Littleton, that the government intended to enforce the whole Coercion Bill, except the part relating to martial law. He was naturally indignant, declared himself tricked out of the Wexford election, called upon the Irish Secretary

Negotiation with Mr. O'Connell. Hansard, xxiv. 1101.

Hansard, xxiv. 1106.

to retire, and told the whole story in the House—inciting his opponent to deliver his version first. On inquiry in the other House, the Premier and the Lord Chancellor declared, the next evening, that they knew nothing of any negotiations between the Irish Secretary and Mr. O'Connell, and that they did not believe that any such had taken place. Great must have been their astonishment when they read the Secretary's own statement of the transaction, which was not so materially different from Mr. O'Connell's as to exempt him from the charge of "gross indiscretion." His plea for the change of the policy of the Cabinet was that new circumstances became known to government, which justified a renewal of the provisions against political meetings: but, as he did not explain what those circumstances were, the plea did not improve his case. The general impression was that he had been sincere, but most unwise: that he ought to have resigned office, on such a conviction of indiscretion; and that the affairs of the nation could no longer be safely confided to an administration so ill combined, and whose proceedings were so desultory and immature.

Mr. Littleton's Explanation.

To the Premier, the affair must have been deeply wounding: and it proved to be fatal to his political life. He was aware, as we know by Lord Althorp's explanations, that a valuable minority in his Cabinet were of the same opinion with the Lord Lieutenant; viz., that the clauses against public meetings in Ireland need not be re-enacted; and that this minority had yielded the point only to avoid breaking up the Cabinet: and now that Mr. O'Connell had been admitted by the Irish Secretary to a peep at this state of things—(he, of all men!)—what remained of dignity or efficiency to his government? When he moved the second reading of the Coercion Bill on the 4th of July, he spoke low and hurriedly. His son-in-law, Lord Durham, opposed the re-enactment of the clauses against political meetings, in words as few and moderate as his honest convictions permitted; and his opposition was received with a good grace by the Minister; but it was one of the incidents which wrought against the tottering government.

Hansard, xxiv. 1337.

This was on Friday night. On Saturday, Mr. Littleton tendered his resignation. It was not accepted—indignant as Lord Grey had declared himself about the transaction with Mr. O'Connell. It was supposed that there was little hope of filling up the vacancy, in a perilous crisis, with an able man who was sure of a seat in the House—so deep was now the unpopularity of the Whig ministry. But on Monday Lord Althorp resigned, and would not be persuaded to remain in office. High as his character stood for honesty and courage, he was aware that it would not sustain him under the odium of carrying through the Commons such a Coercion Bill as he was now universally known to have condemned in Council. He persisted in retiring; and then Lord Grey saw no other course than resigning too. By Lord Althorp's retirement, he lost his best colleague: the Coercion Bill would have no authority now, if even he could pass it; and if he relinquished it, his belief was well known to be that Ireland could not be governed without it. On Tuesday he presented his resignation to the King.

Resignation of Lord Althorp.

Of Lord Grey.

On Wednesday evening, the last act was to be done. The old statesman, now in his 71st year, had to take leave of power. He was worn and weakened by the toils and responsibilities of office, and he was conscious of having

1834. fallen somewhat behind the time—earnest as he was in saying that the times went too fast, and not he too slow. The close of his term of power was mortifying, if not ignoble, in its character—affording but too much incitement to the taunts and vindictiveness of adversaries—taunts and triumphs which were not spared even on this occasion. Twice he rose and murmured a few words, stopped, and sank down upon his seat. The House cheered him, but he seemed unable to rise. The Duke of Wellington occupied a few minutes in presenting petitions, in order to give Lord Grey time to recover himself. When the old man rose a third time, he spoke feebly and tremulously; but he gathered strength as he proceeded, and so spoke as to interest all feelings, of friend or foe, except where, as in the cases of the Duke of Wellington and the Lord Chancellor, an overpowering fear for the Church and other institutions, and personal regards, hardened the heart and closed the mind against reverent emotions and clear convictions, which were shared by all others who had the privilege to hear. The Duke naturally fired up at the implied charge of vacillation against his brother, the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, in regard to the Coercion Bill; and it was natural that, with a brotherly feeling for Lord Wellesley's responsibilities, he should vehemently assert that Lord Grey's resignation, being unnecessary, was a desertion of his sovereign: but the rest of the speech, in which he reviewed the measures of Lord Grey's government, was nothing short of malignant. One circumstance which could not be overlooked at the time, and cannot pass unnoticed by the reader of our day, is its perfect likeness, in conception and spirit, to Lord Grey's speech against Canning, which fixed the deepest arrow of the flight under which he sank. Lord Grey was less unhappy than Canning in being present to hear what was said of him, instead of learning it from others and being unable to reply: and again, the Duke had not power so to express himself as to wound so deeply as Lord Grey; and thus the retribution was not severe: but it must have sorely embittered the parting moment. It is bitter even to the impartial reader to witness these displays of infirmity—of that deep-seated infirmity which weakens the moral force of three such men as these—rendering them unable, not only to appreciate each other's course, but to wait with patience to see the results—asking Time to be the arbiter, who will be the arbiter in spite of them. The Lord Chancellor's speech drew off the hearers from the painful feelings excited by the Duke, or gave others in their place. There was abundant laudation of Lord Grey—such as it required courage to offer, face to face, to such a man: but with it a clear rebuke to him for resigning: and upon this followed a sentence or two which, grave as was the occasion, caused shouts of laughter—there being few present who did not know something of the state of the King's mind towards the Ministers, who were so formidably reforming the Church against his will. The Lord Chancellor "felt that he should not discharge his duty if, at all sacrifice of his comfort—at all abandonment of his own ease—at the destruction, if so it might be, of his own peace of mind, he did not stand by that gracious Monarch and that country whose support—whose cordial and hearty support—he had received during the three years and a-half of which he had been a member of the government. After having said this, he need not add that he had not tendered his resignation." When the laughter permitted him to be again heard, he

Lord Grey's Farewell. Hansard, xxiv. 1305.

Hansard, xxiv. 1325.

asked, "Did their Lordships think that there was any thing very peculiarly merry or amusing in being Minister at the present time?" No;—in the contempt into which this administration had long been falling, there was nothing that was not painful to all sound-hearted men, of every party.

Lord Grey's Political Character.

Lord Grey, in his speech, requested a fair judgment from those who thought he had committed errors, and did not anticipate any charge of indifference to principle or deviation from honour. He might well feel this security. Brighter honour never shone through any statesman's life: a nobler consistency never crowned a statesman's career. On this not a syllable need be said; for with him, throughout his life, the word answered to the thought; and he possessed the deep secret of high honour, in other people's feelings being to him as his own. His honour was not of the nice and sensitive character which springs from egotism, and has therefore a dash of cowardice in it: it was of the brave and healthy sort which needs no special care, but flourishes best by thinking seldom of itself. The only approach to a doubt on this part of Lord Grey's character was caused by his profuse distribution of office among his relations; and he thought, with great simplicity, that he had disposed of this complaint in his speech of this night, by asking whether these many relations did not do their work well, and declaring that the family connexion generally had grown, not richer but poorer since they came into office. Could such a man overlook the truth that it is unfair to exclude others from office by filling departments with members of one family, and detrimental to the interests of the State to have in its departments an overruling cast of ideas and feelings? Did he not know how strong was the national response to Canning when he complained of the monopoly of government by "a few great families?" And could such a man suppose that the complainants were thinking only of the salaries that his relations engrossed, and not of the honours, powers, occupations, and dignities, of office? This was one of the "errors" with which he anticipated that he might be charged. And it is difficult to charge him with any other: for the rest was not error but incapacity;—an induced incapacity, with which he was afflicted (and the nation through him) through the evil operation of aristocratic station, uncorrected by timely political labour, and the extensive intercourses which are a privilege attendant upon it. He knew no more of the British people than he did of the Spaniards or the Germans. He did not see the scope of his own Reform Bill, and could not bear the consequences of his own greatest act—the fruition of the aim of his whole life. When he had himself taken up the House of Lords in his hand, broken its fastenings, and set it down in a lower place, he insisted that it was still where it was before; and he "would stand by his order" against any who declared to the contrary. He governed with a feeble and uncertain hand, because he could not freely throw his mind into the common stock with his colleagues, or induce them to do the same. He respected them—valued them—graced them—but could not make common cause with them. And he fell by insisting on coercing speech in Ireland when the ruler of Ireland offered to govern that country without a power so stringent, and his own "best arm" in the Cabinet, and some other valuable members, were opposed to the act of despotism. It was needless to protest that he acted from his conscience. No-

1834. body doubted his doing so, in all his political acts. The question was whether his conscience was illumined by the best lights of intelligence. When the Grand Inquisitor declared that he acted from conscientious love of his victims; when Francis of Austria and Metternich declared that the Spielburg prisoners were tortured, body and mind, for the sake of the nation;—when the Duke of York pleaded conscience for his intended rigour towards the Catholics—nobody doubted the sincerity of the men. The question was, whether their consciences could be permitted to overrule those of a multitude of other men. And so, in a much milder way, was it now in the case of Lord Grey. The question was, whether speech was to be coerced in Ireland because Lord Grey conscientiously believed it ought. Mr. Littleton expressed in the Commons, on this same night, a remorse which it was painful to witness for the act by which he had compelled the decision. It was natural that he should do so, but there were few or none who thought, in a little while, that the event was to be lamented. It was not only that the Cabinet could not have stood for any length of time: it was that the manner of Lord Grey's fall, however mortifying to his friends and his party, and pathetic in all eyes, was instructive, alike as a comment on the past and a warning for the future. And for himself—his lot was not hard, though less brilliant than it had been. He was nowhere blamed for any fault but that which perhaps he had no great objection to be charged with—an excess of the aristocratic spirit. He retired, amidst universal, if not unmingled sympathy and respect, to enjoy the repose which his years required, in the bosom of a family by whom he was adored. He had had the last experience of civic glory: and he was now to find how much more he enjoyed the serene household glories of a home like his.

Hansard, xxiv. 1338.

CHAPTER X.

1834.

RELIGIOUS CRISIS.

THE period under review, memorable on many accounts, is for nothing more so than for the perturbations of its religious life. How long the crisis might have been deferred, and what would have been its issue, if the war had been protracted, it is impossible to divine. It was after seventeen years of Peace, and with the reforms of a Peace-period for its proximate cause, that it actually occurred; and sooner or later it must have occurred, under any conditions of the secular life of the nation. As it was, the perturbation was so extraordinary, and to those who were timid by constitution or by creed so fearful, that it seemed as if the fountains of the deeps of men's minds were broken up. Amidst the deluge of conflicting theologies and wills, the administration and parliament drifted helplessly and blindly; and it was clear that no good steering was to be expected from them, nor any discovery of dry land where the struggling minds of men might find a footing and rest. Such crises are, as the clear-sighted of all parties admit, an inevitable consequence of an union of Church and State. The firmest friends of that union admit this without hesitation, while declaring the advantages of such an arrangement to preponderate over the occasional inconvenience and risk. As time passes on, and those changes are wrought which never cease, the terms of the union must be remodelled, and newly-risen questions must be settled, while it is quite certain that the Ministers of the State will not be able fully to enter into the views of those of the Church; and the Ministers of the Church must inevitably despise and be shocked at the statesman's views of religious claims and affairs.

When the critical period of indispensable change arrives, all difficulties are aggravated—in the instance of England and her Establishment—by the perpetual existence of three parties within that church, whose views and habit of mind differ too widely to admit of a peaceable coexistence for any length of time in a Protestant Establishment—though the Romish Church is able, in such a case, to include and occupy them all, without controversy and confusion. This weighty fact has been adverted to before, in connexion with the first manifestation of the great disturbance which was now to reach its height for the time—that is, when the controversy on the Peterborough Questions took place in 1821. That first instance of revived High Church domination over faith took the nation by surprise—the oppressed clergy petitioned parliament for relief and justice; almost every voice that was raised at all was raised against the claim of the Bishop; and there was one circumstance in the case that was never forgotten, and will never be forgotten—that no Bishop but the one appealed against opened his lips upon the subject, though every endeavour was used in the House of Lords to make the Prelates speak. Clear as it was to all that they were in parliament for the very purpose of guiding the State

Vol. i. p. 283.

1834. in such affairs as this, their constrained and ignoble silence showed that they were unprepared for the great controversy, just then opening, between the claims of the Church and the Protestant doctrine of liberty of opinion.

The Tractarians. Twelve years elapsed between that discussion in parliament and the reduction of the Irish Church by the Administration of Lord Grey. In the interval, rumours had spread of the rise of a sect within the Church, whose headquarters were at Oxford: as there had been rumours before of the rise of a Church sect at Cambridge. That at Cambridge had originated the movement called Evangelical, intended to revive the life of religion in the Church, and promoted by the earnest zeal and munificence of its members in filling the pulpits of the Establishment with devout Calvinistic Ministers, who caused a powerful religious revival among the aristocratic and wealthy classes of society. The Oxford movement was of a widely different character—representing as it did the opposite party in the Church from that of the Simeons, Wilberforces, and Thorntons. The rumours which stole abroad told of observances which excited no little surprise, while some who heard were amused, and others seriously grieved and alarmed. It was scarcely conceivable that Laud and his ways should have risen up again among us in the nineteenth century; yet those who had seen and heard what went on within the University of Oxford told of priestly claims, and obedience of novices, of homage to the memory of Charles the Martyr, of devout reception and study of ancient Tradition and the Christian Fathers, and a passionate disparagement of the Reformation and Protestantism; of exclusive reliance on the sacraments of the Church; of the most frequent possible celebration of its services; of the setting-up of oratories and of crosses; of scrupulosity about garments and postures and fasts; and even of auricular confession. Where so much was said, something must be true; and it was not long before the Oxford men published to the world ample evidence that some strange things indeed were true.

On occasion of the reduction of the Irish Church, the Oxford party believed the time to be come for them to preach their principles, and save, if it yet might be, the Church and the nation. They denied the rightful power of the government to touch the constitution and revenues of the Church; and they apprehended that parliament would gratify the earnest desire of a large body of churchmen, in reforming the Book of Common Prayer, through a commission of State appointment. To avert such a desecration, and all further spoliation of the Church, and to obtain perhaps a restitution of what had been taken from her, the Oxford sect resolved to work upon the public mind in all directions: through the press, as well as by means of the pulpit and private exhortation, and vigorous proselyting among the young. According to their own authorized statement, delivered by Mr. Perceval in a letter to the Editor of the *Irish Ecclesiastical Journal*, their first business was to enforce their tenets through a set of Tracts, which gave to the sect, for some years, the name of Tractarians. The leading doctrine of these Tracts is that of Apostolical Succession. The only way of salvation is declared to be through the sacrament of the Lord's Supper; and the only way in which that sacrament can be administered is by the hands of the successors of the apostles, with whom is deposited this sole power of communicating the means of salvation.

The necessity of Episcopacy is thus declared, and not merely its expediency: and from this follows a train of doctrines which do not need more than a slight indication. As the Scriptures do not contain any account of the institution of episcopacy by Christ, some other and co-equal authority must be adduced: and Tradition is that co-ordinate authority.' Hence follows the exclusive reverence for the Christian Fathers, as the historians and registrars of tradition. Hence, too, the reverence for many of the forms and observances of Romanism which, being traced to an episcopal foundation, cannot be refused. Hence, too, the indignation and horror at the interference of government with Church funds and offices; and an expressed willingness that the Church should, as soon as possible, be separated from the State. Of these Tracts, Dr. Arnold wrote in April, 1834, "they are strenuously puffed by the *British Magazine*, and Life of Arnold, i. 374. strenuously circulated among the clergy; of course, I do not suppose that any living man out of the clergy is in the slightest danger of being influenced by them, except so far as they may lead him to despise the clergy for countenancing them." The fact did not answer to this anticipation. If the Tractarian clergy might soon be counted by hundreds, their followers, and the diligent readers of the 'Tracts for the Times,' presently amounted to tens of thousands: and there is nothing to wonder at in this, if we remember the proneness of the human mind to rely upon authority, and to seek safety in definite observances. Far on in the nineteenth century, therefore, the zealous Protestants of the empire saw spectacles which filled them with anger and dismay:—on the one hand, a striking increase of the Catholic body, from the earnestness with which noble and wealthy Catholics applied themselves to use the present crisis for the good of their Church: and on the other hand, the rise and spread of a body, within and from our own university of Oxford, who were always disparaging Protestantism, and themselves growing so like Catholics, that it was hard for the common run of men, who used Protestantism for a political cry, to make out the difference. From month to month, there were rumours of one or another Tractarian having gone over to Romanism—rumours which were highly resented, and proved in the 'Tracts' to be necessarily false: and for a while, they were not true: but, in no long time, a conversion to Romanism began within the University, and spread so undeniably, that the kindred character of the principles of Romanism and Tractarianism has for some time ceased to be disputed. During this period, then, one of the three parties in the Church was succeeding in substituting for the previous idea of religion another whose popular spread made some good men's hearts fail them for fear. Theology in the priesthood and unlimited obedience in the flock were now to be the idea of a Christian Church. In many a church there was contention about wearing the surplice; about old and new or revived methods of celebrating the service; about the frequency of the administration of the Communion; and other points which the bishops were as sorely perplexed as pressed to solve. As a body, the bishops showed themselves weak and still unprepared. There was no unity of view or action among them on the occurrence of this great schism in the Church; and the multitude added contempt of this weakness to their indignation at the conduct of the spiritual peers about the Reform Bill, and were at no pains to conceal their feelings. The Archbishop of Canterbury

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Annual Register, 1832, Chron. 106.
Annual Register, 1831, Chron. 167.

was mobbed at the doors of his own cathedral—pelted with brickbats, cabbage stalks, and opprobrious words, to his extreme consternation. The Bishop of London had a year before been prevented from preaching at St. Ann's, Soho, by an intimation that when he rose in the pulpit, the larger part of the congregation would leave their seats. Much of this was political feeling: but it was aggravated, and not dispersed, by the irresolute and uncombined conduct of the prelates under the appeal of the Tractarians. The heads of the church were evidently not ready for the crisis of the church.

Annual Register, 1832, Chron. 183.

The strongest popular sympathy, in connexion with this party, was with a clergyman here and there who fell a victim to his sense of duty in enforcing his rights—not from the love of lucre, but the fear of surrendering any of the prerogatives of his function. One of these, the Rev. Irvine Whitty, rector of a parish in Ireland, was shot, after having brought forty-five suits for the recovery of tithes at one sessions. Another was a clergyman in the south of England, who enforced his tithes, under a sense of duty to his Church, to a point which maddened his poor neighbours; and the general feeling was fearfully expressed by a man who shot him dead from behind a haycock in his own field. The popular resentment in these cases followed those who had instituted a false ideal of a Christian Church, rather than the weak men who had been mastered by that idea. While the pity for these victims was yet fresh, every one looked to see what would happen at the installation of the Duke of Wellington as Chancellor of Oxford, at a time so critical. The proceedings there, while very amusing, were significant enough. The young men in the theatre are wont to express their partialities and dislikes, political and religious, on these occasions—thus giving notice to the world what it has to expect from the rising generation of professional men and legislators: and the watch-words and cries were never more significant than on the present occasion. There were thunders of applause when cheers were asked for the Bishops, Mr. Stanley, and the Duke of Cumberland: and never-ending groans at the Irish Church Commission, the Administration, and the Gower Street Company—meaning the London University. The word "the Dissenters" was received "with a long-protracted snuffle, and an ejaculation of 'Amen', from several voices, in imitation of the nasal twang of the conventicle." This, again, was like a restoration of the seventeenth century. The peculiar enmity against the Dissenters on this occasion was a piece of retribution on a movement of the moderate Church party to obtain admission for them to the Universities: and nothing could be more offensive than two cries and their reception—"the University and her privileges," and "London University and her want of privileges." The cheers for Oxford and her exclusiveness were natural and fair enough: but the virulent desire to exclude the Dissenters from privilege every where was well understood to be expressed by these lads on behalf of their class and order. Such were the doings—serious and playful—of the High Church party during this period.

Annual Register, 1834, Chron. 80.

The Evangelical Party.

As for the immediately opposing party—the Low Church or Evangelical section—they were active, but less prosperous than they had been. It appeared that the Tractarian multitude was largely increased from the ranks of the Evangelical party. There were many lowly and tender spirits, worn and anxious with the care of working out their salvation by the constant upholding of their faith at a certain pitch, and afflicted with misgivings about the sufficiency of their personal interest in Christ, and of their assurance of safety, who were glad to turn at once into the shelter of a system where they had the protection of a priesthood, which permitted them to repose their cares upon others, on the simple condition of obedience to definite commands, and which prescribed a clear ritual duty in discharge of obligations which had hitherto weighed heavily upon their consciences. It was natural that the numbers that went over from the Low to the High Church should be considerable.—Some of the brightest lights of the sect, too, were extinguished within this period. Its honoured and beloved Wilberforce was laid in his grave during this time: and to no man did the sect owe so much. His Mayday nature was too genial to be clouded by the gloomiest Calvinism. While striving through life to afflict himself with self-reproach and doubts of his safety, as well as to take upon himself (which he did in the noblest sincerity of heart) the woes of all who sinned and suffered, his glorious and exquisite nature broke through all factitious restraints, and made him free, joyous, and benign, as if he had never taken upon his lips that language of his sect which abounds at once in denunciation and terror, in slavishness and pride. He was far above fear and haughtiness alike, though he might strive to feel both: and, while exhorting to the attainment of a specific faith, as the only security for salvation, he so abounded in good works as to earn the wondering veneration of all living men, and the gratitude of unborn generations. The affectionate, confiding, cheerful old man—wise as a sage and fresh as an infant—sank into death just after learning that the Negro Emancipation Act might be considered safe: and when he closed his eyes, the brightest light of his sect went out.—The influence of the body had been materially confirmed by the writings of Hannah More, whose books are a curious reflection of a part of the spirit of her time. The reflection may be regarded as exaggerated however; for it would be hard to impute to the sect all the spiritual pride and censoriousness, the narrowness of view, and factitious interpretation of nature, life, and scripture, which pervade her writings. But the solemnity, the self-analysis, vigilance, asceticism, and intemperance of both fear and hope, are thoroughly characteristic of the sect, and merely aggravated in Hannah More, as they were neutralized in Wilberforce, by the constitution of the individual. Her writings had a vast circulation in their day; and, as they sprang from the spirit which originated the present Evangelical movement, so they largely assisted in kindling and spreading it.

Death of Wilberforce.

Of Hannah More.

The activity of the sect was shown during this period chiefly in its own walk—of denunciation, and obstructive asceticism. It does not appear to have taken any conspicuous part either with or against the government on the questions of the time regarding the rights, liabilities, and duties of the Church. But it begged for ordinances of religious humiliation under the infliction of the Cholera—in some places held up the Cholera as a judgment on the nation for its spiritual levity;—instituted the Sabbatarian movement which has been revived, from time to time, to this day;—obstructed the publication of geological knowledge, lest Scripture should be discredited by the disagreement of the beginning of Genesis with the discoveries of modern science; and discountenanced the Musical Festivals which were a feature of the time, including, as they did, sacred music, and being frequently held in

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churches. While the Oxford sect were encouraging Art, promoting freedom and gaiety of spirits in the intervals of religious observance—as on Sunday evenings—and holding that none but the priesthood have any concern with consequences while they scrupulously fulfil conditions, the sons of the Cambridge movement were acting in a curiously opposite manner. A Sabbatarian Bill, full of insufferable and impracticable provisions, was called for once a year, by aristocratic gentlemen who could not suffer under it while bringing it to bear upon the poor in their comfortless homes, or to prevent their going abroad:—a Bishop employed himself in invidiously counting the boats which passed under Putney Bridge on the Sunday:—dissension was risked at the early meetings of the British Association for the advancement of Science by clergymen who declared themselves resolved to defend the Mosaic scriptures from the inroads of scientific innovation: and certain newspapers praised the conduct of divines—and among others, the Bishop of London—for withdrawing from all appearance of countenancing the Musical Festival, held in Westminster Abbey in 1834. The scruple was about "employing a church as a place of sensual recreation:" and the doubt was presently extended to the use of music at all in religious worship. These differences between the two sects were practical assertions of their respective doctrines of priesthood and no priesthood;—the insufficiency and the sufficiency of Scripture;—and the ritual and ascetic modes of life and worship.

Standard, July, 1834.

Moderate Church Party.

The action of the Third party in the Church during this period is no less conspicuous than that of the first, and far more so than that of the second. This, the Moderate party, was that to which the Ministry and, on the whole, parliament may be said to belong, if they could, with their diversity of view and unfixedness of theory, be said to belong to any one division. Ministers of state, and members of parliament, generally speaking, have not the training—that of the clergy on the one hand, and of the nonconformists on the other—which furnishes men with fixed principles of judgment and action on Church matters; and there is therefore no subject on which legislators usually appear so weak. The surest indication of their views given by Ministers was by their clerical appointments; and the appointments under Lord Grey's administration—especially that of Dr. Whateley to the Archbishopric of Dublin—spoke plainly enough. Amidst their infirmity of action, and backwardness of speech, they showed their conviction that the Establishment needed reform: they made a large reduction of Irish bishoprics, consented to a large reduction of Irish tithe (though the measure was not carried), and proposed to commute Church rates in England, for the relief of the consciences of Dissenters. The Dissenters refused to accept any thing short of a total abolition of these rates, seeing no relief to conscience, and no recognition of its rights, in a measure which would compel them to pay the same tax under another name: but the proposition showed the tendencies of Ministers. Another decisive act of the same character was their favouring the petitions sent in, whether by Dissenters or Members of the University, for the admission of Dissenters to degrees in the University. The exclusion of Dissenters by their being required to sign the Thirty-nine Articles was an innovation—declared to be so by the petitioners in the senate of the University of Cambridge—and a very injurious one to the interests of all parties. The restric-

Opening of Universities to Dissenters.

tions were laid on in the reign of James I., in a manner informal and unprecedented, against the wishes of a large number of the then existing members, and in a time of extraordinary turbulence and spiritual oppression. The academical petitioners prayed for a restitution of their ancient laws and liberal usages, whereby many excellent citizens, now excluded by conscience from entering the Universities, might be admitted to degrees, and thus made more available to the good of their country. When Lord Grey presented this petition in the Upper House, and Mr. Spring Rice in the Lower, both these Ministers pledged themselves to use every effort in their individual capacities to carry the measure of relief proposed. Counter petitions were sent in from both Universities, much more numerously signed; and their advocates in the House and elsewhere appeared to think the question decided in equity by the preponderance of opinion within the Universities: but the government and the Houses generally thought that the opinions of parliament, the Dissenters themselves, and the public at large, were no less pertinent than those of the privileged University men; and the debate was long and ardent. The case of the exclusionists was destroyed by the existing Cambridge practice of admitting Dissenters to every thing but the honours. They might enter and study, and be on an equal footing with churchmen till their twelfth term, when the demand upon them to sign the articles barred them from degrees. This was strongly presented by Mr. Spring Rice, in the debate on the Dissenters' Bill; while others showed how fearful was the snare to consciences in such a case—how powerful a temptation was presented to a young man to sign what he did not believe; and how injurious it was to the Universities themselves, and to public rectitude, to enforce regulations which, in common with all religious tests, keep out the most valuable men—the conscientious—and let in the unscrupulous. On the other side, there was some ridicule of Dissenters for "feeling so deeply exclusion from the empty honour of a degree," and apprehension that, if admitted to that, they would next crave possession of office and emolument in the universities: they were too small a minority to be worth altering the plans of the institutions for; yet they were so numerous, and increasing so fast, that they would soon overthrow the Church:—the subscription to articles was a mere form which no reasonable man need scruple to go through; yet it was the bulwark of the Church which must not be touched:—the Dissenters would carry off so few prizes in life compared with Churchmen that it was folly to suppose they lost any thing worth debating about by the present arrangement; yet, there was no saying what would become of the connexion between Church and State if the liberal professions were thrown open as freely to nonconformists as to members of the Church. Amidst these mutually destructive pleas, the Ministers declared their judgment to be in favour of recurrence to the ancient liberties of the Universities, and deprecated all argument from possible future consequences, not contemplated in the present measures, and which might very well be met in their own time, if they should ever arise. The scene at the third reading of the Bill was disgracefully clamorous, so that the Speaker himself was scarcely able to preserve his equanimity. The mover of the measure, Mr. Wood, could not be heard in his concluding explanations for the "jeering, shouting, coughing, and crowing;" yet he obtained a majority of 164 against

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1834. 75: a proof that Ministers had on this occasion, and in that House, asserted liberal principles with sufficient plainness. Nor did they fail in the other House; though there the Bill was thrown out by a majority of 187 to 85.

The apprehension in this case was that the Dissenters would endeavour to obtain a separation of the Church from the State. The promoters of Mr. Wood's bill saw that to refuse what appeared to them justice to the Dissenters was more dangerous to the Church than any recognition of liberty of conscience. The Church really was at that time in great danger. The High Churchmen and Dissenters were almost equally discontented at its connexion with the State; and the intermediate parties were dissatisfied with its condition, and alarmed at its prospects. "The Church as it now stands," wrote Dr. Arnold in 1832, "no human power can save." He and other moderate Churchmen, therefore, set to work to reform it, while the High Churchmen were proposing its being put under the care of its hierarchy, and the government were striving to disarm the enmity of the Dissenters (as far as they considered that enmity reasonable); and the Dissenters were striving for relief from the liability to support a church of which they conscientiously disapproved.

The Church in danger.

Church Reform.

Among the proposals offered by Churchmen for a reform of the Establishment at that time, the two most conspicuous publications were put forth by Lord Henley and Dr. Arnold. Lord Henley's plan was, that ecclesiastical affairs should be managed by a Convocation; that the bishops should cease to sit in parliament, and that laymen should be wholly silent about matters of Church doctrine. This was so contrary to all Dr. Arnold's views of right, that it called forth his protest in the shape of a pamphlet on Church reform which, in that season of excitement, caused much and angry controversy. "I have one great principle which I never lose sight of," wrote Dr. Arnold: "to insist strongly on the difference between Christian and non-Christian, and to sink into nothing the differences between Christian and Christian." As he proceeds to say, all the world quarrelled with the one half of his principle or the other: but he succeeded in impressing his view at least upon the notice of society, if not upon its convictions. And so he did with regard to a truth, so obvious that it is difficult now to believe how lately society in general was blind to it:—that the Church means not the priesthood, but the body of believers. In every possible way he reiterated this—insisting that Christianity recognised no priesthood—that the whole body of believers were equally brethren and the clergy no more than brethren—till the truth took firm hold of the public mind, and the Tractarian party regarded Dr. Arnold as an impious leveller, and persecuted him for years with the moral weapons which alone the advancement of intelligence has left in the power of the bigot. "Nothing, as it seems to me," wrote Dr. Arnold, after issuing his plan, "can save the Church but an union with the Dissenters." Under the conviction of extreme danger to the Establishment, and of the calamity which its overthrow would be to the whole of society, he proposed changes which, as he afterwards said, ought to be considered in connexion with the alarms of the time, as well as on their own merits—by which, however, he was prepared to abide. After offering an earnest defence of the Establishment, and a statement of its dangers, he proposed, as the only safeguard, the admission of Dissenters within its pale, an accommodation of hours and throwing open of churches

Lord Henley.

Dr. Arnold.

Life of Arnold, i. 381.

Life of Arnold, i. 339.

which would enable all to worship conscientiously under the shelter of the general Church; and such an alteration of the ordinary services as should admit of their being joined in by a large number of Dissenters whose differences with the Church were not radical. He not only defended the presence of the bishops in parliament, but desired in every practicable way to amalgamate religious and secular interests. While doing his utmost for the Church and people whom he loved, he had, however, little hope, from the injustice and insolence with which he saw the Dissenters treated by so-called advocates of the Church; and from the keenness with which, as he observed, the Dissenters understood and felt their principles and their position. "If you see my Pamphlet and Postscript," he wrote, "you will see that I have kept clear of the mere secular questions of tithes and pluralities, and have argued for a comprehension on higher grounds. . . . . . But I fear that our reforms, instead of labouring to unite the Dissenters with the Church, will confirm their separate existence by relieving them from all which they now complain of as a burden. And continuing distinct from the Church, will they not labour to effect its overthrow, till they bring us quite to the American platform?"

Principles of Church Reform.

Life of Arnold, i. 352.

The Dissenters.

What answer were the Dissenters giving to this question? The plain answer was, that every thing depended on what was meant in this case by overthrowing the Church. If the Church was taken in Dr. Arnold's own comprehensive sense of the great body of believers, or in the more limited sense of a body of believers in any particular form of doctrine, neither the Dissenters nor any one else wished to overthrow, or in any way to interfere with, such a church. But if the meaning was an establishment which compelled its own support from those who disapproved of its doctrine and structure, it was certainly true, throughout that period, that a multitude of the Dissenters did desire the overthrow of the taxing and excluding power. Without concerning themselves about other people's belief and management of their own concerns, many of the Dissenters did exert themselves vigorously to obtain relief of conscience for themselves. Some helped to throw out Lord Althorp's measure for the commutation of church-rates, on the ground that it was not the amount of tax that they complained of, but the obligation to support a religious institution of which they disapproved. Several went to prison, during these and succeeding years, and lay there long, rather than pay a few shillings of church-rate. Many petitioned parliament for the removal of the bishops from the legislature. Many demanded admission to the Universities. Many agitated for a dissolution of the union between Church and State. And the body generally gave their support to the propositions of the Ministers to reduce the Irish Church, to review the resources of the Church in England, to extinguish tithes, and to abolish pluralities.

Some curious incidents are found scattered through the registers of these years which show the temper of the times, amidst the convulsion of religious parties. The work called Froude's Remains opens to the reader an astonishing picture of the state of mind and mode of life of the early Tractarians—with their talk of the "detestable Reformation," "odious Protestantism," the insufficiency of Scripture, and its utter destitution of assertion and evidence of the chief essential doctrines of the Christian faith: and their fastings, forms, and

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strong tendency to monachism. An analysis and comparison of their principles and modes of belief, their forms and organization, present so curious and minute a resemblance to those of the Pharisees, as exhibited favourably by Josephus the Pharisee, as to make it astonishing that the parallelism could be overlooked by the members of the new sect themselves. From their great doctrines of the insufficiency of Scripture, the need of Tradition, and priestly succession, to their daily religious forms, the resemblance is astonishing.

GOVERNMENT CIRCULAR.

Next we come to several occasions of great amazement to members of the Administration.—Lord Althorp found himself worsted in an unexpected collision with refractory churchwardens, when he issued a Circular to that body in England and Wales, preparatory to the institution of the Ecclesiastical Commission. The Circular requested information as to the amount, ownership, and liabilities of Church property in their respective parishes. Some took no notice; some declined giving any information; and some wrote in a tone of which the following extract may serve as a specimen. It occurs in the midst of a lecture to the Minister on the Coronation Oath, the sacredness of Church property, and so forth: "It is the part of wise legislators to obtain the most accurate and authentic information, before they attempt to make enactments touching the property and vital interests of millions. Not so with the Administration in which your Lordship holds a prominent office:—they prejudge a case—administer to the passions and vices of the mob, to obtain their concurrence and support—act in ignorance—and mar every thing that they pretend to mend. Nor are we satisfied that you and your colleagues have any more right to meddle with, so as to deteriorate, the property belonging to any clergyman, or any corporate body of the clergy, than the highwayman has to take your purse." We are here furnished with proof that liberty of speech was unrestricted in Great Britain in 1834.

Spectator, 1834, p. 35.

PERPLEXITIES OF MINISTERS.

Next, we find Lord Grey, now old enough to be astonished at nothing, wholly taken by surprise by popular rebukes of his countenance of pluralities. He presented to the Deanery of Down a clergyman who already held a living of 1200*l.* a-year, and gave as his reason, by the mouth of the Irish Secretary, that "it was not too much that such preferment should be bestowed on a son of the Lord Chancellor of Ireland." So open an avowal of Church preferment following on political connexion was caught up with the eagerness to be expected at such a season of crisis: and so was the explanation which the Premier found himself obliged to authorize, of the circumstances under which he had given a stall at Westminster to his relative the Bishop of Hereford. Amazed as he was at the censure incurred by acts till now so little liable to question, the fact was so; and he had only to acquiesce in it: as had Lord Althorp in the Dissenters being offended instead of gratified by his proposed Church-rate measure. The most striking scene of this class, however, appears to have been an interview between the Prime Minister and a deputation of Nottingham Dissenters. When these delegates presented their memorial, Lord Grey supposed that its contents were the same with those of other memorials from Dissenters; to which Mr. Howitt's reply was, that the paper itself would explain that better than he could, as the memorial proceeded from persons whose object was to express their own wishes, and not to look about to see what others were doing. They had prayed for the separation of Church

Hansard, xxii. 599.

England's Seven Administrations, ii. 377.

Annual Register, 1834, Chron. 7.

and State. Lord Grey, who seems throughout this crisis to have been blind to the safety of perfect openness, to have always supposed that people meant more than they said, and to have approved of that method of proceeding, declared that he was sorry, that Ministers would be embarrassed, and parliament alarmed. He could not see what more Dissenters could wish than relief from disabilities as to marriage, burial, registration, and such matters. The deputation replied, that their brethren had thought it best not to stop short of the broad ground of religious liberty. Still Lord Grey was perplexed, for he did not understand the principles of religious liberty. He asked if they wanted to do away with all state establishments of religion: to which Mr. Howitt's reply was, "Precisely: that was what they desired." He explained, that in the opinion of the body he represented, a Christian government should protect Christianity; but that this could be done only by making all bodies of Christians equal before the law. Lord Grey indicated unconsciously the spirit and the fault of his government, by setting forth what he believed it would have been politic for the petitioners to have asked; and that the gaining of that step might have led to something more. The views of the petitioners, however, were not politic but moral; and they were not a party whose obligations and conscience the Prime Minister was likely to be able to expound. The simple reply of the deputation conveyed a severe rebuke. They did not think it honest to ask for less than they desired to have, with a concealed view of obtaining more hereafter. Where a principle was concerned, they thought it right to make a plain and full assertion of it. In this course there was nothing disingenuous; and it left no ground for future discontent and misunderstanding. It might have been happy for the Whig Administration if it had been early familiarized with the broad principle of religious liberty, and, yet more, with the spectacle of a calm and intrepid assertion of any principle in its full scope.

ADMISSION OF QUAKERS TO PARLIAMENT. Hansard, xv. 387. 645.

It may be remembered that, at a former period, one objection to the admission of Jews to parliament was that Quakers were excluded; to which the advocates of the Jews replied, that they were quite ready to admit the Quakers. This was now done. Early in the session of 1833, Mr. Pease, member for Darlington, presented himself at the table, and claimed to make affirmation, instead of taking the oaths. He was ordered to withdraw, on his refusal to take the oaths, and a committee was appointed to consider of his case. The result was that the House, on the recommendation of Mr. Wynn, the chairman of the committee, resolved to admit Mr. Pease, conceiving that if he became, by his entrance, liable to penalties in any courts, the risk was his own, and no concern of theirs. The Ayes were loud and multitudinous, and there were no Nays; and when the Quaker member appeared to make his affirmation, clothed in a complete suit of brown, elegant from its extreme neatness, he was received with a very cordial and general cheering. If one of the objections to the admission of Jews was thus done away, they did not at present profit by it. Their cause was annually pleaded by some Christians, as unquestionably and earnestly religious as any in the House: but the same mutually contradictory arguments for their exclusion were also repeated from year to year; and the religious conflicts of the time yielded no increase of civil rights to them.

CONTINUED EXCLUSION OF JEWS.

And during these conflicts in the Church, and between its members and the Dissenters, Death was putting in his cold hand, to draw away one and another

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of the assertors of full religious liberty, to a region of utter stillness. Where angry voices were now clamouring, their loved tones would never more charm to silence the strife of tongues: where eyes were flashing in enthusiasm or passion, or congregations were met calmly to assert their rights of conscience, some grey-haired leaders were absent, and would never meet their brethren again. The Baptists had lost Robert Hall; or rather, the world had lost him. From him, Sir J. Mackintosh said that he had learned more of principles than from all the books he had ever read: and while he could thus meet the strongest men on their own ground, he could charm the most ignorant, and rouse the most apathetic, by the light and glory which streamed from the fountain of the heart in floods of eloquence which it required only an open heart to receive. This great man's life was one of fearful suffering from disease—from anguish of body which, at one period, helped to overthrow his mind, and which, ever after his recovery from that insanity, kept him apparently too low and weak for duty. But duty was his strength; and in him was seen, from week to week, that marvel which has often attended a briefer martyrdom—that of the extinction of the sense of pain under the strong workings of the nobler powers. When he feebly entered the pulpit, and rose feebly to speak, and spoke at first in a voice so low and husky as to make his hearers wish him at home and at rest, it was scarcely possible to believe him the Robert Hall whose vigorous championship of the rights of conscience, and broad assertion of a liberal philosophy, were before the world: but from moment to moment the fire was kindling and spreading within him: his torment subsided—his eye brightened—his voice grew strong and sweet—he was in heaven for the time, and carried his hearers a long way on towards it too. Amidst the conflicts of Christian faiths at this time, he disappeared; and the voice which, the more it roused souls, spread the more a deepening calm, would never again rebuke the strife of sects, and recommend to them, as he loved to do, "the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace."—Another was withdrawn, too, of whom no one knew whether he ought to be called Churchman or Dissenter. Rowland Hill had received deacon's orders, and always insisted that he was an episcopalian clergyman: but he preached any and every where—in all sorts of chapels, in private rooms, under trees in parks, and in the open fields. His mission was—or seemed to himself to be—to find fault all round, except with persons too obscure to fix the eyes of men. He was the foe of John Wesley in early life, and afterwards the censor of all churches—having as vehement an intolerance of sectarianism as sects in his latter days had of each other. When the white hairs of fourscore years hung beside his brows, his rebukes had another power added to that of his strong and apt and piercing thought; and, aged as he was, he was missed at a time of conflict, when he would have proved himself almost as powerful in shaming men out of their religious contentions as Robert Hall in elevating them above them.—His organist, Charles Wesley, whose devout soul found utterance in music, was wont to soothe the troubled and abashed hearers of the eccentric pastor by divine strains, which were only in true harmony, however, with the prayers of the old divine: and now, the pastor being gone, the harmonist soon followed—wafted away, it might almost be said, in music. During the wanderings of his last illness, he scarcely ceased his low singing of the airs of

Death of Robert Hall.

Of Rowland Hill.

Of Charles Wesley.

Handel. With him departed one more tranquillizing and sanctifying influence from the religious world of the period. From four years old, when his music drew tears down the cheeks of listeners, to the age of seventy-six, he was a living harp, made resonant by every breath of thought, incident, and feeling; and a sad silence settled down upon his place when death had snapped the chords at last.—The learned Adam Clarke died during the fierceness of the sectarian conflict. In his youth, he had known and witnessed more of religious excitement than most men; for, when only nineteen, he was one of Wesley's itinerant preachers. The quietness of the study suited him better, however; and he withdrew more and more into it—delighting himself with various antiquarian research, but devoting his best resources of every kind to his great Commentary on the Bible. He educated two Buddhist priests for the function of Christian missionaries in Ceylon, and baptized them: but that part of his work afterwards appeared to himself fruitless; for they became high priests in their own temples at home. He was immersed in his biblical studies in his last days; and we may hope that the clamours of theological strife came softened to him in his retreat, and gave as little disturbance to his peace as to his faith: but his very quietness was an admonition which could ill be spared at such a time.—One other there was whose departure at this juncture can never be alluded to without clouding the countenances of all who knew his story. Rammohun Roy was the descendant of Brahmins of a high order. He was born a British subject in India; and he used all the opportunity given him by birth and position for cultivating his mind, and enlarging his knowledge. He became a Christian, and gloried—till he came to England—in the liberty and liberality secured, as he believed, by that faith. He learned the languages necessary for studying the Scriptures in the original; and from them he directly derived his views of the comprehension, charity, and fundamental liberty, of the Christian religion. He arrived in England in 1831, to watch over the reconstruction of the India Company's Charter. The impressible Hindoo was sufficiently excited by the merely political movements of the time: but its religious conflicts affected him much more deeply. He could not recognise the Christianity he had learned and so dearly loved amidst the pretension of the Tractarians, and the asceticism of the Evangelicals, and the wrath of the Irish Protestants, and the tumult of the Irish Catholics, and the conflicts between the Church and the Dissenters, and the widening split in the Scotch Church, and the profane antics of the Irvingites. He went to hear all within his reach—he was ready with sympathy for all who were not angry or proud—he poured out his wonder and sorrow at what he saw—and—he wasted, day by day. Other causes of trouble he is believed to have had: but it was the painful excitement of his sojourn in England that was fatal to him. A sickly hue—not concealed by the dark skin—settled upon his cheek: the hair round the turban, once so crisp, became thin and lank; the long fingers grew thinner and thinner; the cheerful voice grew listless and hoarse; the light of the eye went out; the tall frame was bent; and an expression of ghastliness gathered about the once mobile and smiling mouth. He sank at the first touch of illness, resigning himself to the Hindoo observances desired by his attendants, and was laid—not among any of the Christians whose strifes had so chilled and wounded his hope and heart—but alone, among the

Of Adam Clarke.

Of Rammohun Roy.

1834. trees of a private garden belonging to the mansion where he died. It is not in our time, as it once was, that the heathen say, as they look thoughtfully on, "See how these Christians love one another!" Rammohun Roy found the religious world in England very far indeed from even the view of one of her own churchmen—"to insist strongly on the difference between Christian and non-Christian, and to sink into nothing the differences between Christian and Christian."

Of Dr. Doyle.

Annual Register, 1834, p. 220.

Schism in Scotch Church.

The prevalent faith in Ireland lost a champion at this time in the death of the Roman Catholic Bishop Doyle. And in Scotland, the schism was begun which was to end in the secession of the Free Church from the Establishment. In 1834, the General Assembly, whose constitution had been much modified by the operation of the Scotch Borough Reform Bill, passed a law which interfered considerably with the function of patronage, increasing the difficulty to any patron of settling a minister who should be unacceptable to a congregation. Bodies of Churchmen had already seceded, and formed themselves into "Voluntary Church Associations," many Dissenters joining them; and now, many more Dissenters sided with the Church, on the passage of the Act restraining the powers of patrons; which powers had been the most important original cause of dissent in Scotland. A fierce storm was evidently driving up; and we shall hereafter have to watch its explosion.

Irving.

Life of Mackintosh, ii. 478.

Amidst such turbulence, there must be eccentricity. The intellectually and morally infirm become excited in noisy times, and cannot be kept quiet. Irving and his fantastical worship have been mentioned before, as a natural product of such a crisis: and now came the close of that tragedy;—a tragedy which, like so many others, involved with its mournfulness much of the horrible and of the ludicrous. Canning had been one of his hearers. On Sir J. Mackintosh mentioning a prayer of Irving's—"We pray for those orphans who have been deprived of their parents, and are now thrown on the fatherhood of God," Canning "started" at the beauty of the expression, and made Sir J. Mackintosh take him to the Scotch Church the next Sunday. There was then no one of any kind of eminence who did not go to swell the crowd at the Scotch Church. But such fashions do not last. As soon as the social and sympathetic nature of the man was roused, and his love of sympathy and approbation kindled to an irrepressible flame, "fashion went her idle way," as Carlyle says, "to gaze on Egyptian crocodiles, Iroquois hunters, or what else there might be; forgot this man—who unhappily could not in his turn forget. . . . There was now the impossibility to live neglected; to walk on the quiet paths, where alone it is well with us. Singularity must henceforth succeed singularity." By the time his church was ready, his fame had greatly sunk; and even the exhibition of the Unknown Tongues brought few strangers. There can be no doubt that some of his own flock, and a few more, were sincere believers in the gift of Tongues:—that of those who sat in that church in the grey of the wintry morning, listening for the shrill unearthly sound from the lips of the "gifted," many believed that the end of the world was at hand; as indeed did some who were not usually superstitious. But Irving felt himself, for the last seven years of his life, neglected; and to him to be neglected was to be forlorn. He could not acquiesce; and he wore himself out in the effort to keep up incessant excitement in himself and his sect—and to draw in towards himself notice, wonder, and sympathy from without. On the 2nd of May, 1832, he was excluded from the Scotch Church, on the ground of heresy. It was after this that he betook himself to the little chapel in Newman Street, where the worst exhibitions of eccentricity took place. Through all these, he was believed by Dr. Chalmers "to be a man of deep and devoted piety." We have seen what he was as "the blooming young man." "The last time I saw him," says the same recorder, "was three months ago, in London. Friendliness still beamed in his eyes, but now from amidst unquiet fire: his face was flaccid, wasted, unsound; hoary as with extreme age: he was trembling over the brink of the grave." His last words were, "In life and death I am the Lord's." He was in his 43rd year. The body of his followers did not immediately melt away; and the name of an Irvingite may still be heard here and there: but there was no distinctive doctrine to hold them together; scarcely a bond but that of belief in Irving and the Tongues: and the sect stands on record chiefly as an eccentricity—as a rebuke of the intemperance of the time.

Carlyle's Miscellanies, iv. 83.

His Death.

In such a period, it is not wonderful that some, sickened with the apparent fruitlessness of the religion of unity, peace, and charity, should turn towards a profession which combined social with religious objects, and should become eccentric in their turn. The system called St. Simonism was preached in England in 1832, offering a new law of love and human equality, in the place of that Christian one which it assumed, from existing appearances, to have failed. Attempts were made to laugh it down: but the strife of the Christian world gave it a weight which could not be got rid of by mere scorn: and many listened, with new hope and a long-forgotten cheer, to the preaching of the golden rule of this new faith;—that every one should be employed according to his capacity, and rewarded according to his works. Society was to be ruled by persons of genius and virtue, and under them, all were to have a fair start—to be allowed the free use of their best powers, and reap their natural reward. The spiritual, intellectual, and industrial concerns of each and all were to be combined in a closer union than ever before; and thus, work was to be worship, and affectionate co-operation was to be piety. Amidst much that interested some of the best hearts, and engaged some of the noblest minds of the time, there were doctrines and provisions that would not stand a close examination. While it was supposed that the rulers would be persons of virtue and genius, the proposed organization offered a scheme of a hierarchy which might easily, and would probably, become an intolerable despotism—a locked frame-work, in which individual freedom might become impossible. Still, from the nobleness of its social Rule, from its union of religious appeal with social sympathy, and from the humbling and embarrassing condition of the religious world at the time, the disciples of St. Simon were not few in England, and their quality was of no mean order. At meetings in London, the French chief of the St. Simonian Church in London presided, in the costume of the sect, and told, by the lips of English friends, the story of its propagandism; for its missionaries were abroad, from Constantinople to the Mississippi. Among the speakers, stands the name of the virtuous Rowland Detrosier, the Chairman of the Manchester Political Union—as an inquirer and assistant, not an advocate: and it may be noted among the

St. Simonism.

Annual Register, 1833, Chron. 153.

1834. signs of the times that a system of Communism, elevated, just, and spiritualized enough to engage the inquiring sympathy of men of his class, should then, amidst the haughty claims of the churches, obtain any footing in England. Rowland Detrosier died the next year, "directing his remains to be devoted to the purposes of science:" and St. Simonism did not long survive him. There may be wardrobes where the dress of the sect is laid by in lavender, and now and then wistfully looked at:—there may be times when families and friends revert to the golden rule of labour and its recompense, and speculate on when it will come into practice: but St. Simonism has long taken its place among the religious and social eccentricities of its day.

Proposed Ecclesiastical Commission.

The most evident practical result of the religious conflicts of the period was the quickening of the purposes of the government to get out the Ecclesiastical Commission which was to inquire into the condition of the Church in England, and redistribute its temporalities. This Commission was set to work in 1835.—As for the rest, it may be hoped that a multitude remembered at the time, as we do now, that noise and confusion are in their very nature superficial and fitful. Turbulence is on the surface: calmness is within the depths. Christianity in England was far from being like what this narrative of critical phenomena, taken alone, would represent it. For every conspicuous personage who was announcing or denouncing, or remonstrating, or propounding, or anathematizing, or demanding, there were hundreds or thousands of quiet Christians at home, humbly living by their light, and religiously following peace with all men. Because the faith was, visibly, before the eyes of all men, corrupted in high places, it was not necessarily spoiled to the multitude who dwelt below. To the thousands who sat on the grass in the wilderness of life, Christ might be breaking bread, while his handful of preachers and witnesses were contending which should be greatest. If it was scarcely possible at the moment for all to help visiting some of the pain and shame of such contentions on the religion which was their ostensible theme, it would be folly and ignorance for us to do so now. The controversialists and brawlers of the time were not the British nation: and those to whom the Christian religion was dear as glad tidings of Peace and good-will, lived in that sunshine, and only wondered at the far-off blackness and tempest which did not overcloud their sky.

CHAPTER XI.

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Finance.

IF the unreasonable expectations of the country were a hardship upon the Whig Administration generally, there was no particular in which such expectations were more perplexing than that of Finance. The nation ought to have known that this was a point on which the Whigs must be weak—in practice, if not in conception. There is, perhaps, no office of the government so difficult to fill well as that of Chancellor of the Exchequer; and certainly none in regard to which it is so impossible to anticipate correctly whether any man will fill it well or ill. He may have gone through all the preparatory offices, and be deservedly looked up to for all the qualities which all these offices can elicit; and yet, when he takes the one other step, he, for his part, may find himself in a wholly new world, for which his previous training may have done little to fit him, and every body else may find him a very bad Chancellor of the Exchequer. The only certain point about the matter is, that a man who has had no training, and who is moreover a novice in executive politics altogether, cannot fill the office well. This was Lord Althorp's constant plea—urged even pathetically. He was wont to say that he was forced into the office against his will: he was wont to solicit information, as an alms, on every hand: he entreated every one to observe the tentative character of his proposals, and to believe that he was quite ready to give them up: and he conveyed the impression, every time he opened any financial subject, that he supposed the chances to be against his information being correct, and his plans feasible. Yet, with all this candour on his part, the people were slow to learn the incapacity of Whig administrations in matters of Finance. When the sayings of the Whigs in opposition were remembered—their complaints of heavy taxation, their demands of reform, their criticisms on financial measures—the multitude, including whole classes who ought to have known better, looked for a large immediate reduction of taxation—a prodigious lightening of the national burdens—as soon as a liberal minister should take the national accounts in hand. At the end of their first term—when Lord Grey went out of office, there was something ludicrous as well as humbling in looking back to see what had been done. The Ministers and their friends complained of factious opposition in parliament, and of faithlessness and impertinence in their underlings; complaints which were a mere confession of weakness: for the Duke of Wellington's government had practically shown their willingness to reduce the national burdens; and there was no party, in or out of parliament, which was not ready for as much financial reform as the Whig government was able to conceive of: and, as for the underlings, this was a sort of business which it was not in their power to obstruct, if it had been pursued on any broad and clear principle, such as parliament and the country were able to understand and to sustain. But there was no principle in the case,

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nor the remotest conception of any; while there was a wholly gratuitous violation of principle, as Lord Althorp himself avowed, on the very first occasion of producing his budget.

At the outset of his explanations, the Chancellor of the Exchequer declared that the government adopted the principles and views of Sir Henry Parnell, in his work on financial reform: a declaration which the author, who was present, would naturally wish unmade when he heard, year after year, Lord Althorp's recommendations of his budget.

First Budget.

The subject was opened on the 11th of February, 1831, when it was yet too early for much more than a declaration of intentions. Lord Althorp referred to the national expectation of great reductions of abuse and expense, and said that the government proposed to reduce eventually 210 places under its own Hansard, ii. 404. appointment. The reduction would for some time be merely of patronage, and not of expense: and of the 210, seventy-one were officers of the dock-yards, sixty in the Irish post-office, and forty-six receivers of taxes in England, whose salaries could not be large; so that the benefit was more in the example than in any immediate relief. The surplus this year would be small—about 300,000*l.*; an amount which some of the friends of government considered too small to justify any reduction of taxation: but Lord Althorp seems to have considered himself bound to make some immediate changes. He seems to have been unaware that a mere transposition, such as he proposed, can give little relief, while any disarrangement is in itself an evil requiring relief to compensate for it; and that a partial reduction of several taxes tells for less than a total abolition of a few, because the expenses of collection and management remain, instead of being swept away. In both these points his scheme was faulty; and Sir Henry Parnell presently took occasion to deny its being formed on his principles. He approved of taking off taxes; but there was nothing in his book to sanction laying on new duties when the public service could be provided for without.

Hansard, ii. 988. There was to be a reduction of the duties on tobacco, on newspapers, stamps and advertisements, on candles and tallow, and an abolition of duties on sea-borne coal, on printed calicoes, on glass, and on auctions. As a deficiency of above three millions would be thus caused, compensation must be found. For this end, there was to be an equalization of the duties on foreign wines, on Baltic and Canada timber, and on large and small coal for export: and several new duties were to be laid on, of which the worst in principle—and admitted by Lord Althorp himself to be so—was that of an increase to 1*d.* per lb. on all raw cotton imported. The taxing of the raw material of manufactures, he declared to be an essential mischief, "which, however, the advantages would, Hansard, ii. 414. he hoped, counterbalance." He pleaded its smallness in extenuation of its badness. The other new taxes were on travellers by steam-boat; on the transfer of landed property; and on the *bonâ fide* transfer of property in the funds.

The whole budget was severely treated; but the outcry on this last item was the loudest. Lord Althorp gave it up, and also the steam-boat tax. The duty on the transfer of real property of course went too: and to make up for the cutting-off of these proposed resources, the duties on tobacco and glass must be retained. Thus the greater part of the plan was gone already; and a defeat on the Timber-duties question awaited the Minister. He proposed, on the 18th of March, to render the change of duties more gradual, and so involved the fiscal question with the wider one of Free Trade, that the Opposition required either a Committee of Inquiry, or time for consideration. Lord Althorp declined both, and was left in a minority of forty-six. The duty on Cape wines was again altered, and the penny cotton duty was reduced to 5-8ths of a penny; and thus scarcely any thing remained of Lord Althorp's first Budget.

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Hansard, iii. 576.

This compelled him to bring forward the subject again within the year; and October was the time, as parliament was sitting at that unusual season on account of the Reform Bill. The most remarkable fact in connexion with this statement was the result of the reductions in the Excise and Customs, made by the late government within two years. The estimated reductions had amounted to nearly four millions and a half, while the actual decrease had been little more than two millions and a half, in the last year. Lord Althorp felt confident that he did not make any exaggerated statement when he assured the House that it might rely on a surplus for the year of £493,479. "He had examined the statements in every way that he could, and he was sure that he was not chargeable with any exaggeration." This was on the 3d of October. On the 17th, the Duke of Wellington gave warning that the Ministers would find themselves mistaken in their hopes of half a million of surplus; and declared that the utmost surplus could not exceed £10,000: but Lord Grey "could not see on what principle" the statement of Lord Althorp could be disallowed, and was confident that government might have taken credit for a much larger surplus. The event was such as might make the Duke himself as much surprised as the Ministers were ashamed.

Hansard, vii. 1031.

Hansard, viii. 847.

STATEMENT OF 1832.

From the occupation of parliament and the country with the Reform Bill, it was the 27th of July before Lord Althorp could bring forward his financial statement, though he must long have been wishing the exposure well over. His delightful candour, however, smoothed his way through difficulties which would have been most galling to men less truthful, or more self-seeking. "I am quite aware," said he, "that my statement must be one which a Chancellor of the Exchequer has been unaccustomed to make of late years; and therefore I have to throw myself upon the indulgence of the House." The surplus of last autumn had dwindled away, month by month; and instead of the half million anticipated, there was now a deficiency of more than £600,000. Under such circumstances, no reduction of the public burdens could be proposed; and the Ministers were persuaded, now that they saw things by the lights of office (which really are essential to a perfect judgment of such matters), that the vigorous reforms under the late government had carried reduction as far as it could safely go. The present Ministers had cut down the estimates to the amount of £2,000,000, and declared that henceforth any relief to the people must come from economy in the departments, to obtain a surplus, and not from reduction of taxes. The unexpected deficiency was ascribed in part to the arrival of the cholera, and to political excitement; but there was also an oversight of Lord Althorp's, pointed out by himself: he had forgotten the expiration of the beer duties in the spring, which made a difference of £350,000.

Hansard, xiv. 849.

Statement of 1833; Hansard, xvii. 326-339.

On the next occasion, he presented his Budget for the first time to a Reformed Parliament. This was on the 19th of April, 1833. First, he gave a good account of the reductions of official expenses by Lord Grey's government. They had abolished 1307 places, with an immediate saving of £192,000, and a prospective one of £38,000 more, on the expiration of the retired allowances: and some saving in such allowances had taken place in another direction, by bringing retired revenue servants into active duty again, as opportunity offered. Lord Aberdeen's reductions in the diplomatic department, under the late administration, had been carried on, till they now reached nearly £100,000. There was now a surplus, and one considerable enough to do more than pay off the previous deficiency: and Lord Althorp ascribed this to the reduction in the estimates, and not to any remarkable improvement in the yield of the taxes. It enabled him to offer something in the shape of a boon to the tax-payers; and what he proposed was this:—to abolish the duty on tiles, and the cotton duty laid on two years before: and to reduce the duty on soap one half, and, in various proportions, the duties on advertisements, and on marine insurance, and several assessed taxes.

It was clear that the Ministers had no ideas on the subject of taxation: no principle—no orderly plan. There was a touch here and a touch there; now a notice of a little experiment; and again a retractation of it: but nowhere, a broad procedure based on sound reasons. The whole management was not only empirical but desultory. To men who knew anything of the principles of finance, certain lessons of this year—this first year of a Reformed Parliament—would have been painfully impressive; only, that to men who duly felt the responsibilities of government they could not have occurred.

Hansard, xvii. 336.

"When I laid the additional duty on raw cotton in 1831," (there had been an almost inappreciable *ad valorem* duty before) "I said that it was radically wrong in principle," Lord Althorp now declared, with an unabashed air, "and that, on the first opportunity which arrived, it ought to be reduced. That opportunity has now arrived." It seems never to have occurred to him that there was anything wrong in thus playing fast and loose with such a power of interference as that of taxation—that there was any objection to laying on a tax one year and taking it off another, deranging the course of manufactures and commerce at each operation. Nor, on any one of the many occasions of his acknowledgment of the vicious principle of the taxes which he imposed or retained, did he show any shame in alleging the most trifling pretences of temporary convenience. Some astonished observers at last came to the conclusion that there was something behind;—that Lord Althorp himself—the most ingenuous of men—assigned one set of reasons, and acted upon another. And in truth, there *was* something behind; and it *was* the practice of this administration, and perhaps its very worst fault, to assign bad reasons for good acts, and insufficient reasons for bad acts.

Some reference has been made before to the fatal practice of the Whig administrations of yielding to clamour whatever it chose to demand; and, after a time, to yield nothing but what was demanded by clamour. It was pointed out that this really revolutionary system began with the Tories—with the protracted refusal of the Catholic claims: but it has since become a dis-

Assessed Taxes Movement.

tinguishing characteristic of what are called liberal administrations. In this particular, in which Lord Grey's cabinet as a whole was inculpated, Lord Althorp was perhaps the greatest sinner: and a clear publication of the fact was before the world during this and the succeeding session. At a public meeting, at this date, when some proposition about Dissenters' rights was made, the mover was entreated to wait and be patient, and not embarrass the Ministry. "Not embarrass the Ministry!" he cried: "Why, I never found yet that any thing was to be had but by embarrassing the Ministry:" and his closing words were lost amidst vociferous cheering. And of the whole administration, it was understood that the Chancellor of the Exchequer was the most impressible by clamour, from his good-nature, his indolence, his consciousness of unfitness for his work, and his consequent lack of self-reliance. Accordingly, he became the butt of all discontented tax-payers: and they made him so miserable that he daily sighed to be able either to repeal all taxes whatever, or to hide himself on one of his stock farms. From the moment he could not but see that the turbulent among the tax-paying multitude had discovered how to manage him, he lost all energy: and the movement against the assessed taxes reached a point which disturbed the peace of the metropolis. And not only of the metropolis; for in several large towns there were threatenings of fiscal rebellion, and every where a strong disgust at the ineptitude of the Finance Minister.

In answer to the universal complaints of the injury and inconvenience of our methods of taxation, by which industry was fettered, food made dear, knowledge taxed, incomes rendered uncertain, and tempers tried past endurance, the government thought it enough to say that these things could not be remedied without making "an extensive change in the whole financial system." But this extensive change in the financial system of the country was one of the promises of the Reform Ministry—one of the labours to which a Reformed Parliament was pledged. It was told in the House how astonished an eminent foreigner, M. Simond, was at seeing an exciseman in a glass-house quietly permitted to interfere with the process of manufacture, and how earnestly M. Simond inquired whether the spirit of the English people could really patiently endure such an intrusion. It was asked why the English people should endure such a method of taxation—why there should not be a complete revision and reform of our financial system—why there had not been already such a reform—why a year had been lost. The discussion of this matter, the pressing of these questions in the House, and, through the newspapers, in the country, became very urgent during this session of 1833; and Lord Althorp had nothing, as yet, to reply, but that he would take off a little here and lay on a little there, and that to do more would be "to make an extensive change in the whole financial system." Certain classes of taxpayers therefore took the matter into their own hands. A prodigious outcry was raised against the House and Window taxes.

The House Tax.

These two taxes were always mentioned together by those who desired to get rid of them: but many thought—and among them the Chancellor of the Exchequer—that while the window-tax was one of the worst on the list, the house duty was one of the best. The window-tax is a duty upon fresh air, sunshine, and health: the house duty had the merits of being a

1834. direct tax, and of falling on a class particularly well able to pay it—that of proprietors of houses. The truth of the matter was, however, that the tenants of London houses—a numerous class of shopkeepers and others occupying large premises—paid the tax during occupancy, the amount being allowed for in their rent. By obtaining a repeal of the tax, they would pocket its amount during the remainder of their lease; and the event proved that this was motive enough for a noisy agitation. It never was general in the country: it did not spread beyond London and two or three of the large towns: but it was too much for the energy of Lord Althorp. Associations were formed to resist the payment of these taxes: no purchasers came forward for goods seized for arrears of these duties: when the levy was made, it was necessary to bring out, not only a large force of police, but of soldiery: and these were got rid of by terrified lodgers or friends of the recusants handing the money out of upper windows. Long and noisy processions of London tenants—chiefly shopkeepers of the west-end—came to besiege the Treasury chambers: and for some hours, it was difficult for horse or foot passengers to make their way between Parliament Street and Charing Cross. Lord Althorp was earnestly assured by those who understood the parties, (and he declared that he believed it himself,) that the outcry was only tentative, and the discontent partial and selfish: yet he gave way, as will be presently seen. "What taxes would you reduce, if you were in my place?" he asked of an adviser. "Certainly not the house duty—that is nearly the best tax we have," was the reply. "It is," he said: "it is a good tax: yet you would yield if you had been in Whitehall yesterday, and had heard the clamour that I had to hear." "It is only the west-end shopkeepers, who want to pocket a bonus." "I know it: but what can I do?" This was early in 1834; and it was only in the preceding May that the Chancellor had obtained the sanction of parliament to the continuance of the house and window taxes by a majority of 273 to 124. Hansard, xviii. 32. On the 21st of next February, he incurred the banter of Sir Robert Peel, by his change of tone on this question. He was rather disposed to remit the house tax, though he believed that it was not the best that he could remit—he could have put down the resistance to the tax: yet the resistance was partly the reason of his giving up the point. "He would leave the matter open for a certain period, so that each member might present his plan to the House: and if any honourable gentleman should succeed in inducing the House to prefer any other tax for remission, he would not propose to repeal the house tax." Hansard, xxi. 690. This was a direct invitation to clamour against every tax on the list. "The noble Lord," said Sir Robert Peel, "was the last person to object to this gentle violence. There never was so clear an invitation to be ravished . . . . . He would, for six months, give a clear stage and no favour to all those who were anxious to make him change his course." After this, it was no matter of wonder that the house tax figured at the head of the reductions proposed, when the Budget was brought forward, in the next July. Statement of 1834. Hansard, xxv. 505. "The first, and by much the largest," said Lord Althorp, "was that reduction which he had already proposed, of the house tax, amounting to 1,200,000*l.*" The window tax was at the same time slightly reduced, at a cost of 35,000*l.*—the relief being given to small farm-houses.

WESTMINSTER ELECTION.

The excitements of the times in relation to these duties, and the difficulties of Ministers, were increased by the necessity of a Westminster election, on account of them. Sir J. C. Hobhouse, one of the representatives of Westminster, and secretary for Ireland, had repeatedly condemned these taxes in his addresses to his constituents, and in his speeches in parliament. When Lord Althorp began to waver, Sir J. C. Hobhouse absented himself from divisions: and after doing so on the 30th of April, was called to account by his constituents, and resigned both his office and his seat. He presented himself again for Westminster, but was thrown out; and the election was conducted with a violence, and an enmity towards the government, which showed how far it was possible to sink in popularity in one year, by a timid or indolent omission to redeem pledges of financial reform given in days of struggle and hope. There is no doubt that this Westminster election determined much of the character of the next year's Budget, though the Chancellor of the Exchequer was not qualified, as he himself declared, to redeem the promises of the government by proposing a large measure of financial reform.

Annual Register, 1833, Chron. 78.

THE MALT TAX.

If the administration showed itself irresolute and imperfectly informed, it was not the House of Commons that had at this time any right to offer ridicule or reproach. On the 26th of April, 1833, a reduction of the Malt tax was proposed by Sir William Ingilby—a reduction amounting to at least as much as the relief proposed from the repeal of the house duty. The Chancellor of the Exchequer remonstrated, declaring that such a reduction would compel the imposition of a property tax. The House decided in its favour, however, by a majority of 10: and the Ministers found themselves in a difficulty under which they must have time for deliberation. The only declaration made on the instant by Lord Althorp was, that he should be ashamed not to acquiesce in the expressed decision of the House. On consideration, however, it did not appear necessary so to acquiesce; and it was resolved in the Cabinet to induce the Commons to rescind their vote. Lord Althorp tendered his resignation the morning after being out-voted on Sir William Ingilby's motion: but Lord Grey advised the King not to receive it. The country gentlemen were by some means made to understand that any reduction of taxation begun by them would be taken out of their hands by the manufacturing interest with more vigour than any other party could command. Lord Althorp was persuaded that he did not stand pledged to abide by the decision of the House, as his words at the moment were taken to imply; and the Commons rescinded, on the Tuesday night, the vote of the preceding Friday on the malt tax. It is not to be wondered at that the people were becoming dissatisfied with the way in which their financial affairs were decided on and conducted. Once more during the session of 1833, the Chancellor of the Exchequer was in a minority on such matters. On the 16th of July, Mr. Ruthven carried a resolution in favour of relief by the abolition of all sinecures, obtaining a majority of nine over the government. On this occasion, however, it was not necessary to act on the resolution, or to resign in consequence of it: and nothing ensued from this ministerial defeat.

Hansard, xix. 704.

Next year, affairs looked better. The estimates were reduced half a million: and Sir James Graham had been so active in his office at the

1834.

Surplus of 1834.

Hansard, xxv. 502.

Hansard, xxi. 685.

The Corn Laws.

Hansard, xxi. 1329.

Admiralty, that a reduction of nearly a million and a-quarter on an expenditure of six millions had taken place in three years. The surplus for the year, when the accounts were made up in July 1834, was upwards of two millions. There would be a smaller surplus next year, because the interest of the twenty millions given to the West India planters was to be payable from the ensuing 1st of August: but there would still be enough to admit of a considerable reduction of taxation—probably 1,620,000*l.* There was no occasion now for O'Connell to renew his proposition, made in April, to attack the Debt, by reducing the interest arbitrarily one-sixth; and then again, when wanted—a proposition which excited so much outcry as made him glad to be silent upon it henceforth, and never more to try the House of Commons with talk of "the cant of national faith." It was no longer necessary, the House thought this year, to repeal the malt duty; and Mr. Cobbett's motion for its abolition was voted down by an immense majority. It was not thought necessary for the House to attend to the subject of duties on food, as Mr. Hume proposed. Some members of the government voted with Mr. Hume, being previously pledged to advocate relaxations in the corn laws. Lord Althorp, though made fully aware long before that the New Poor Law was framed on the supposition of the repeal of the Corn Laws, declared to the House that he should meet the motion with a direct negative, "although against his theoretical opinion:" and also, that "it was not the intention of the government, as a government, to introduce any measure for the alteration of the Corn Laws, and that government, as a government, would not support any such measure, if introduced." What remained was for the Chancellor of the Exchequer to say what he could propose for the relief of the tax-paying public.

Hansard, xxv. 505.

Total Reductions.

By some changes in the duties on the licenses of dealers in spirits and in beer, he expected to raise his surplus to 1,815,000*l.* Out of this he proposed to repeal the house tax (as before declared), several minor assessed taxes, some small Customs and Excise duties which interfered with manufactures, and one of the Stamp duties—that on almanacs, which produced some popular irritation. All these together would amount to upwards of a million and a-half. On this, the last occasion of Lord Althorp's responsibility to parliament as Chancellor of the Exchequer, he spoke cheerfully of the condition and prospects of the country. While between six and seven millions of taxes had been taken off during his term of office—(immediately after large reductions by the preceding Ministry,) the income was reduced only 3,000,000*l.* The reduction of the expenditure had been nearly two millions and a-half; and provision would actually be made for our new obligations to the West Indies, not only without increased taxation, but at the same time with a diminution. It was certainly true that great improvements were taking place, and considerable relief granted from year to year, though the nation had yet to wait for an able administration of its financial affairs, and for any thing approaching to reform, or even revision, of its financial system.

Poor Law for Ireland.

Hansard, xiii. 831.

Before the new English Poor Law was framed, a Poor Law for Ireland was proposed in parliament by Mr. Sadler, in June, 1832. For various reasons, the general feeling was strongly against it. Several members implored the House and the Ministry not to subject Ireland to such a curse as the Poor Law had been to England, till it should be proved that there was no better way of relieving the indigent.' Ministers wished to wait to see the result of certain new arrangements in Ireland about rating for the benefit of the sick, from the success of which some hints might be derived. There was no subject on which O'Connell vacillated more than this; and there is no doubt that his irresolution was real. He had promised the poor Irish that when he came into parliament, he would never rest till he had obtained a Poor Law for them: but now he opposed Mr. Sadler's resolutions; and frequently afterwards alleged that a compulsory charity was irreligious, and tended to lessen the free alms-giving which he regarded as a duty and grace enjoined and commended in scripture. In saying this, he truly represented the Catholic portion of his countrymen, and exhibited the main difficulty of that most difficult problem—how to work a Poor Law in the Catholic and most pauperized districts of Ireland. At a subsequent time, O'Connell assented to a Poor Law, when in London, among reasoning men: and then again he repented, on the other side the channel, and implored pardon of God and man for his irreligious compliance: and then, once more, he changed—not through profligacy in this case, apparently, but through a conflict between two sets of ideas and feelings which could not be made to agree. He had time for consideration; for the commission sent out to investigate and report upon the applicability of a Poor Law to Ireland did not go forth on their work till 1835: but O'Connell was no more ready with a decision then than three years before.

Registry of Deeds.

The refusal of parliament during this period to entertain any proposition for a registry of deeds relating to real property was striking and perplexing to foreigners and persons unfamiliar with the interests of the landed aristocracy in our country. Bills were brought in by Mr. Campbell and Mr. William Brougham—measures which were declared to be well framed and unobjectionable; yet the House of Commons rejected them again and again. No one openly disputed the need of such a registry. It was allowed to be a hardship that when a purchaser was buying land, he had no means of clearly ascertaining whether he had access to all the deeds which could affect the title. It was admitted that nothing could be more just, more simply convenient, than a general registry of deeds, which should put a purchaser in possession of his own case, and secure him from all risk from evidence, concealed through design or accident, which might affect his purchase after he had paid for it. Yet the House would not accept any measure of the kind; and both Mr. Campbell's and Mr. W. Brougham's were got rid of on such frivolous pretences as to convey an irresistible impression that the landed interest had unavowed reasons for what they did. When they thus set people guessing, the reason assigned was that they were afraid of their mortgages becoming known—afraid that it would no longer remain a secret how their estates were encumbered. Mr. Campbell's first announcement of his measure was in December, 1830, and Mr. W. Brougham's in May, 1833; and the second rejection of the latter measure took place May 7th, 1834, by a majority of 161 to 45 against the second reading: and a curious social symptom this appeared to all thoughtful observers. Hansard, xxiii. 740.

The Ballot.

There was another case, far more important than this, in regard to which the whole world was aware that men's speech did not answer to their thought.

1834. There was another measure which parliament rejected, year after year, for pretences so utterly untenable as to show that the real reasons for opposition were unavowed. This was the Ballot. Of course, every man was at full liberty to dislike and deprecate the ballot. The peculiarity of the case was in the assigning of various reasons so incompatible as to make the listener look round, and wonder at the gravity with which the argument was carried on. The case to be met was simply this. The extended franchise was not fully exercised; the negligent possessors were lectured, rebuked, sounded, canvassed; but they (in large numbers) omitted to vote. Anxious as they had been for the Reform Bill, they now did not use its privileges. Their reason was that the Bill did not furnish the needful safeguards of their new responsibility. Intimidation of voters ran as high as ever; and Lord Althorp, the long-declared advocate of the protecting ballot, now thought himself obliged to be mute and idle, and leave the tradesman and the farmer, and every voter who had any connexion with a class above him, to the mercy of his neighbours or his patrons. Year after year, did Mr. Grote bring forward his motion in favour of the ballot for the protection of voters; and year after year was he met by the same incompatible objections—that it would not work, and that it would work too well—that Britons will not be bribed, and that they would be bribed incessantly under the cover of the ballot—that the voting classes are of too high an order to be insulted with such a protection, and that broad publicity was necessary to keep them up to their duty. Thus the question was met, from year to year, till, through a singular virtual coalition between two opposite classes, the popular demand for the ballot was overpowered. The aristocracy would not surrender their influence over the dependent class of voters: and that influence was known to be so powerful, through intimidation where bribery would not avail, that the vast multitude of non-electors took upon themselves to watch over its operation. The electors were their representatives; and this secondary representation they were resolved not to relinquish. They could send up an influence from below as powerful as that which brooded from above, and they would not, any more than the aristocracy, have it intercepted by the ballot. Such was the issue of the painful state of the question which lasted during this period, when those who declared in favour of this protection of voters would not act; and those who did were insulted with pleas which were understood all round to be mere disguises of real reasons which no man had courage to avow. Something would have been gained to the heart and courage of the nation, and probably nothing lost to its reputation, if the annual debate had been cut short with the declaration, "We will not give up our power over the voting classes. By mere threats of ruin we can now make tools of our tradesmen and farmers, or keep them quiet; and no harm is done. If they were to be really free in the exercise of the franchise, there is no saying what confusion would ensue; and we only know that all control from us would be at an end." Such was the state of things after the passage of the Reform Bill; a state of things sickening to the hearts of many thousands of husbands and fathers who would have dared any thing for themselves, but could not see that their political duty required them to bring ruin on their households. Such neglected to qualify—setting a bad example therein, and in so far abrogating the Reform Act. And in the midst of a representative system like this—a system which worked imperfectly where it did not work viciously, the Ministers took occasion to say, on all fair opportunities, that they considered the Reform Act final. While it was scarcely possible to exaggerate its value, and the importance of the era which it formed, it was because it opened the way to the achievement hereafter of a real representation, and not because the largest classes of the British nation were actually and immediately represented much more truly than before. As the ballot was not decreed in its own time, it only remains to be seen what stronger security for true representation will have to be accorded at a later day. That such an event is in store is an irresistible conclusion from reading the debates on the ballot during the period under review.

Military Flogging.

The question of military flogging was brought forward year by year by Mr. Hume; and by the session of 1833, it was clear that the debate was becoming more and more embarrassing to men who had always spoken with a natural horror of the flogging of soldiers, but who had lately become aware of the weight of military authority on the other side. After the summer of 1832, every one had perceived that the abolition of military flogging was only a question of time. In May of that year, a private of the Scots Greys had been flogged under circumstances which induced an universal belief that his real offence was not a breach of discipline in the riding-school, as alleged, but his having written a political letter to a newspaper. A Court of Inquiry was held in July, and a sort of reprimand was adjudged to the officer in command. The publicity given to the facts greatly aided the cause advocated by Mr. Hume; and in the next division, there was a majority of only eleven votes in a House of 291 members in favour of the existing system of military punishment. The other fearful tyranny which occurs to all minds in connexion with this—the impressment of seamen—was now beginning to be treated in a tone of seriousness and humanity; and in August, 1833, a division took place less unworthy of the eighteenth year of Peace, than some that had preceded. There was a majority of only five against Mr. Buckingham's motion that it was the duty of the House to avail itself of the season of Peace to inquire whether there was not some better method than that of Impressment of manning ships in time of war.

Hansard, xvii. 68.

Impressment of Seamen.

Hansard, xx. 694.

CHAPTER XII.

1834.

A GLIMPSE is afforded us at this period of that awful interior of the history of the time of which registers and reports tell nothing. They tell nothing because they know nothing, of those movements in some corner of the national heart and mind which are of graver moment than any thing that is laid open to all eyes. Things were going on in the year 1834 which disheartened the few of the upper classes who knew of them, and whose calculations had been too sanguine as to the social effects of nineteen years of Peace, and of four of liberal government. The good effects of peace and liberal government were in fact shown—not in the absence of ignorance and guilt among the people—but in the small results of their guilt and ignorance. If Sidmouth and Castlereagh had been in power, the year 1834 would have been as black an one to remember as that of the Cato Street conspiracy.

Popular Discontents.

Trades Unions.

The prevalence and power of Trades Unions have been referred to; and the murder of a Manchester manufacturer was mentioned at its date. The power and tyranny of the Unions went on increasing, till, in 1834, it became a serious question whether their existence was compatible with the organization of society in England. Half-a-dozen uneducated men—sometimes one able but half-informed man—commanded an obedient host of tens of thousands: and, though the capitalists usually beat in the competition for victory set up by the labourers, the power of the latter over the production and commerce of the country was very great. At this time, a new combination gave an enormous increase of power into their hands. Hitherto, each body had struck for an advance of wages for itself. Now, the various trades combined for the purpose of supporting one another by turns. Some were to work, and maintain others who were contending for their objects: and when these objects were gained, the good office was to be reciprocated. If the great body of labourers, or even the majority of their leaders, had been men of cultivated intelligence, and tempers disciplined accordingly, this year would probably have stood in our history as the date of a vast social revolution wherein capital and labour would have been brought into deadly conflict, or into some new and wonderful agreement. But, though these bodies of labourers understood some momentous truths, and set some noble objects before them—making sacrifices and arrangements for the education of their children and the elevation of their own pursuits—they were not yet instructed and disciplined enough for permanent concert, and, therefore, for success. The tailors of London broke away from their compact, and struck work without the sanction of bodies earning smaller wages than they: and these trades refused to support the tailors. Then, some office-bearers—chosen unwisely—absconded with money; and others mismanaged the funds; and, from one cause or another, continued co-operation appeared to be impossible.

1834.

In the midst of this confusion, which would have presently settled the fate of the Unions for a time, some events occurred, the gravity of which was then, and is now, but little understood by any but a few who did not tell what they knew, because it would not have been believed. Hitherto, the Unions had been universally spoken of as those of Trades: but now it appeared that the extremely poor, ignorant, and depressed agricultural labourers of the southern counties were banded together in Unions, like the Trades. It was the expression of that resistance to supposed tyranny which is the glory or the disgrace—the safeguard or the peril—of a state, according as it is enlightened by knowledge or darkened by passion. In this case, it was considered dangerous, and it was found to be inconvenient. These agricultural Unions must be dissolved; and a method was used which brought after it endless mischief and shame. Six labouring men were indicted at the spring assizes at Dorchester—not for any offence which they and others had ever thought of—but under an obsolete statute, enacted to meet the case of mutiny in the navy, and which made the administering of certain oaths a transportable offence. Ignorant as these men were, they knew that they were in fact charged with one offence and punished for another; and, rapidly as they were hurried out of the country, to undergo their sentence of seven years' transportation, they had time to become aware that public sympathy was with them. Public sympathy was with them, as with men punished by a stretch of law for a nominal offence, which did not repair the mischief of their example in that particular in which it was really wrong and dangerous. As for the Unionists every where, they were exasperated; and they declared that the time was now come for them to rise and overthrow the oppressors whose rule had hitherto disappointed their expectations all the more bitterly for those expectations being in great part unreasonable.

Dorsetshire Labourers.

By the Unionists at large, it was agreed that a grand assemblage of all the Trades should take place in or near London in April, to procure the recall of the Dorsetshire labourers. The day fixed on was the 21st of April, and the place Copenhagen Fields. This was all that the Trades generally knew of the matter. Their leaders, however, agreed that the great unions could and should overawe the weak government of Lord Grey (now in its latter days), and obtain whatever they had set their minds upon. This was all that the leaders in general meditated: but there was a little knot of ferocious conspirators in the midst of them who conducted a central movement, and resolved upon a violent seizure of the government, in the persons of the royal family and Ministers. The Trades were requested to carry their tools—those being specified which would best serve as weapons in the attack upon London. The "glorious band," as the handful of conspirators called themselves, were to carry arms. Accompanying the deputation to the Home Office, they were there to seize the Minister at the moment of reception, dispose of every body else in the office, let in coadjutors, seize the other Offices, take the King and Queen prisoners, secure the Bank and the Tower, and so forth. Lord Melbourne had graciously consented to receive the deputation on the 21st; and this would make the first step easy. He was declared to be "done for." But he received warning, and attended to it: and the Duke of Wellington made ready for the occasion with his usual quietness and promptitude. The great

Day of the Trades.

Autobiography of a Working Man, p. 409.

1834. day was a Monday. On Sunday night, twenty-nine pieces of artillery were brought in from Woolwich, and placed in the neighbourhood of Whitehall, out of sight. Some light cannon were stationed on the roofs of the government offices, so as to command the streets. Large bodies of soldiery came into town during the night, and were kept ready for instant action, though under cover. The public offices were strongly guarded; the police stations were filled with their force, well armed; the magistrates were early at their posts; the park-gates were closed, and the citizens took the hints of the newspapers to stay at home; aides-de-camp were in the streets, in plain clothes, to reconnoitre: and five thousand householders were quickly sworn in as special constables at Guildhall. As for Lord Melbourne, he was not visible. The under-secretary, Mr. Phillips, received the deputation, and told them that a petition, however respectfully worded, could not be received by the Minister when brought in such a manner, nor could Lord Melbourne grant an interview to a deputation so accompanied;—that is, by a procession of 30,000 men. So the petition was placed on its car—a car all blue and crimson—and carried away, to be presented again in a quiet and orderly manner, by a small deputation, five days afterwards. The whole procession repaired to Kennington Common, where Mr. Phillips's reply was repeated on various parts of the ground. There was no attempt to measure their strength against the Duke of Wellington, with his troops and cannon—no attack upon the palace, the Bank, or the Tower. No soldiers were seen in the streets, and scarcely a policeman; when London was again asleep, the artillery and soldiery were conveyed away; and next day, the great city was as if nothing had happened. The end of the matter, as regarded the Dorsetshire labourers, was, that public opinion bore so strongly upon their case, that a free pardon was sent out to them, in Van Diemen's Land; and they returned in 1837, to be escorted through the streets of London, and past the government offices, by a procession of the Trades as numerous as that which had petitioned in their favour in 1834.

On the retirement of Lords Grey and Althorp, the anxiety of the nation about who was to govern the country was less eager than might have been anticipated. The cause of the comparative indifference was that a universal persuasion was abroad that any government that could be formed out of any party must be merely temporary. The feeling in favour of a liberal ministry was still too strong to permit any hope to the Conservatives; while the unpopularity of the Whigs, and the known apprehensions of the King about Church questions, rendered it improbable that such a Cabinet as the last would keep any firm grasp of power.

Changes in the Cabinet.

It was immediately understood that the King's desire was for a coalition Ministry. But this was clearly impracticable. The Commons would hear of no other leader on government questions than Lord Althorp; and they earnestly desired that he should be the head of the government. His station and character would have justified the appointment; and his unsurpassed popularity in parliament—a popularity which could not be fleeting because it was grounded on fine qualities of mind and manners—would have been a strong point in favour of his administration. But he had not ability for such a position. He said so himself, and every body knew it. His being

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Premier was out of the question; but he was not to be parted with from office; and he gave up with a sigh the prospect of retirement to his country business and pleasures, received a pledge that the new Coercion Bill should be framed to meet his views, and became again Chancellor of the Exchequer. It was Lord Melbourne, and no one else, with whom the King consulted upon the reconstruction of the Cabinet. Lord Melbourne becoming Premier, his place at the Home Office was taken by Lord Duncannon—made a Peer: and Sir J. C. Hobhouse took the Woods and Forests, with a seat in the Cabinet.

Late Intrigues.

The first act of the reconstituted government was to carry a new Coercion Bill, in which the clauses prohibitory of political meetings were omitted. The subject of the late intrigues and follies, by which Lord Grey had been removed from office, was not allowed to drop. Repeated demands were made for the production of the Lord Lieutenant's correspondence; and the son of Lord Grey pressed Mr. Littleton with close questions as to who besides himself had been the correspondent of the Lord Lieutenant. Mr. Littleton had suffered too much to be indiscreet again: he positively refused to answer: but it was not denied that there was another. In the Upper House the Lord Chancellor astonished his hearers by declaring his dissent from Lord Grey in regard to Mr. Littleton's act of communicating with Mr. O'Connell. "He did not know how government could be carried on if certain leading men were to be considered as tabooed and interdicted from all communication with the government." When, after making this declaration, he proceeded to avow that he had privately corresponded with the Lord Lieutenant about the Coercion Bill, men felt that no answer was needed from Mr. Littleton to Lord Howick's pressing questions. "He was also" (after mentioning Mr. Littleton's correspondence) "in the frequent habit of corresponding with the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. He had communicated with him on every subject interesting on this or the other side of the water." The newspapers of the time pointed out the Lord Chancellor as the "accomplice" of Mr. Littleton in writing the letter which changed the Lord Lieutenant's opinion on the Coercion Bill, without the knowledge of the Premier: and they further asked whether any Cabinet could be safe with a member in it who could so perplex its councils. The experiment proved a short one.

Hansard, xxv. 692.

The Liberal party believed that it had gained by the changes in the Cabinet; and a more frank and genial spirit of liberalism seemed to spread itself through the government after Lord Melbourne's entrance upon his new office. He was as yet little known in official life: but those who knew him best spoke well of him; he did not suffer under any lack of warning that much had been borne with from Lord Grey that would be fatal to the power of any one else: and the new Premier took such warnings in good part. The session was nearly over—a session in which a vast amount of real business had been done, in the midst of all its mistakes and misadventures: the work of the government lay clear before it; and here was the recess just at hand, in which the measures of the next session might be prepared—for nobody dreamed of a change of Ministry and of principles of government before the next session could begin. On the whole, Lord Melbourne's administration opened cheerfully: and the King's speech, on the 15th of August, was animated in its tone.

1834.

Irish Tithes.

The autumn was variously occupied by the leaders of the parties and the destinies of the kingdom. Mr. O'Connell published a series of letters to the Home Secretary which could be of no service to any good cause from their violence of language, and in this case only aggravated the indisposition of his Irish supporters to receive with a fair construction any measures offered by the Imperial government. The "Slaughter of Rathcormack," which took place in November, and which was a prominent theme with O'Connell during the remainder of his life, might not perhaps have happened if he had not exhorted the people to impatience instead of patience, pending the trial of the government measures in regard to tithe. Some peasants who were opposing the collection of tithe, barred themselves into the yard of a cottage, as an escape from the military who were escorting the clergyman—Archdeacon Ryder—in his tithe-collecting excursion. The gate of the yard was forced, the soldiers fired, and thirteen men were killed, and eight wounded. Eleven of the thirteen were fathers of families. The widow paid her tithe, and the Archdeacon "proceeded to collect his tithes throughout the parish without further molestation." He left behind him the people shutting their shops in the village, and driving every cow and pig out of sight for miles round, and bereaved fathers kneeling with clasped hands, to utter curses on the government, civil and ecclesiastical, which brought such desolation in the name of religion. O'Connell lost no time and spared no strength in exasperating the discontent, as if no healing measures had yet been entered upon.

Spectator, 1834, p. 1226.

The Lord Chancellor.

Meantime, the Lord Chancellor was recreating himself, after a long stretch of arduous business, with a journey in Scotland, before the close of which some incidents occurred which deeply affected a part of the history of future years. He went from town to town, from one public reception to another, opening his mind to any hearers, on any subject: and thus the amount of egotism and indiscretion accumulated in ten days' time so as to fill the newspapers of the day, and fix universal attention. It was on this journey that he declared, at Inverness, that he should let his sovereign know by that night's post how loyal were his subjects in the north of Scotland; a promise which was found not to have been fulfilled. About such proceedings as these men might laugh and be amused; but a scene full of seriousness and significance, and pregnant with political results, took place at Edinburgh, which caused the shedding of many tears in private, and the disappointment of much national hope at a subsequent time. Lord Grey was travelling northwards during this autumn—conveyed in a sort of triumph to his home—and beyond it—to Edinburgh, where a great banquet was given in his honour on the 15th of September. Among the members of his family who attended him was Lord Durham, at once the trusted friend of the old statesman and the beloved of the people. He was the principal framer of the Reform Bill, the consistent advocate of all genuine reforms—a man of the rarest honesty, which took the character of genius for the recognition of truth and right, and for the expression of it. When Lord Grey had earnestly desired his presence in the Cabinet in the summer, he was kept out by the Lord Chancellor and another; and the Liberals in the Commons had expressed their sense of this act by an address to Lord Grey. Notwithstanding these circumstances, the Lord Chancellor appeared at the Grey banquet at Edinburgh: and nothing, as far as was

Lord Durham.

The Grey Banquet.

known, had passed between the honoured guest of that banquet and himself, which need hinder his being present. He made a speech, the most prominent part of which consisted of rebuke to reformers who, in a fretful impatience, endangered all progress by rash attempts to go too fast. His language was so figurative that it is possible that he lost sight, in the pursuit of a succession of metaphors, of the substance of what he meant to convey, or of the impression which it would make on his hearers: but the great body of listeners—who were nearly three thousand—certainly understood him to desire a slackening pace of reform, and less pressure of popular will on the government: and it was in this understanding that Mr. Abercromby, Mr. Ellice, and Sir J. C. Hobhouse responded to the appeal of Lord Durham, and followed up his speech—the celebrated speech of that day—of which some words passed into a proverb, which sustained the heart and hope of the people at the time, but which, in the end, cost him his life, and set back the great work of Colonial Reform. The most memorable words of that speech, the words which were received at the moment with an enthusiasm that spread over the whole kingdom, were these: "My noble and learned friend, Lord Brougham, has been pleased to give some advice which I have no doubt he deems very sound, to some classes of persons—I know none such—who evince too strong a desire to get rid of ancient abuses, and fretful impatience in awaiting the remedies of them. Now I frankly confess I am one of those persons who see with regret every hour which passes over the existence of recognised and unreformed abuses." These words were received with cheers which seemed as if they would never end; and when single voices could be heard, one member of the government after another responded heartily, and said that it was good for public men to witness such scenes and hear such truths: it kept them up to their duty. Among these voices, however, the Lord Chancellor's was not heard. He sat mute—mute at the moment, but not elsewhere. He travelled fast, and was presently at Salisbury, making a speech of defiance against Lord Durham, in which he challenged him to a meeting in the House of Lords. In the number of the Edinburgh Review which appeared immediately afterwards, there was an article whose authorship was evident enough, and was never denied by either the editor or the presumed writer, which charged Lord Durham with having opposed a thorough reform of Parliament in the Cabinet, and with the gravest breach of trust—with revealing the secrets of the Cabinet. By the Salisbury challenge this quarrel—interesting in itself, as between two eminent liberal leaders—was made a matter of public principle: and it was inevitable that Lord Durham should be regarded as the staunch reformer that he had ever shown himself to be, while Lord Brougham offered himself as the representative of the retarding or "drag" system of government, as it was then called. Hence it was that those words of Lord Durham at the Grey banquet passed immediately into a proverb, and were taken as a text for political discourses, and were seen on banners, and as mottoes to newspapers and tracts. Hence it was too that the vindication of Lord Durham's honour became a public concern. It is probable that no one ever doubted his honour: but such a charge as that of betraying Cabinet secrets must be met—difficult as it was to do so without a betrayal of Cabinet secrets in the act of defence. The thing was done, and well done, at a banquet given to Lord Durham, at Glas-

Spectator, 1834, p. 891.

England's Seven Administrations, iii. 114.

Prospect of new Parties.

1834

Spectator, 1834, p. 1033.

gow, on the 29th of October. He there read a letter from Lord Grey which settled the question. Lord Grey declared his opinion that it was impossible for Lord Durham to reveal, for his own justification, anything that had passed in the Cabinet; but he offered his own unqualified testimony to Lord Durham's fidelity to his public professions and his official duty. This testimony of the Prime Minister was enough; and the past was settled. As for the future, there was to be first a passage of words in the House of Lords. To this men began to look forward eagerly. They saw no further, and little dreamed what consequences of this hostility lay hid in the future. And, as a few days proved, they could not see so far as even the opening of the session. "He has been pleased," said Lord Durham, of his antagonist, "to challenge me to meet him in the House of Lords. I know well the meaning of the taunt. He is aware of his infinite superiority over me in one respect; and so am I. He is a practised orator, and a powerful debater. I am not. I speak but seldom in Parliament, and always with reluctance in an assembly where I meet with no sympathy from an unwilling majority. He knows full well the advantage which he has over me; and he knows too that in any attack which he may make on me in the House of Lords, he will be warmly and cordially supported by them. With all these manifold advantages, almost overwhelming, I fear him not, and I will meet him there, if it be unfortunately necessary to repeat what he was pleased to term my 'criticisms.'" Thus did the ground appear to be prepared for a new assertion of the People's Cause, in regard to the reforms remaining to be achieved; but before the time came, the King had interposed—Lord Brougham had taken leave of office, and the Conservative party was in power. The King, it was understood, did not look forward with any satisfaction to the proposed controversy in the House of Lords; and his mind had long been uneasy about the treatment of the Irish Church by the Whig Ministry. He seized the occasion of the death of Lord Spencer—by which Lord Althorp was raised to the peerage—to dismiss his Ministers, and seek for satisfaction to his mind from the opposite party.

Spectator, 1834, p. 1034.

Dissolution of the Ministry.

The surprise to the Ministers themselves appears to have been great. All that had happened was that Lord Althorp could no longer be Chancellor of the Exchequer, from his removal to the Upper House. But Lord Melbourne had an immediate resource in Lord John Russell. He went down to Brighton on the 13th, and remained there till the Friday evening, when he returned to town, to tell his colleagues that the King had sent for the Duke of Wellington. Whether he had any thing more to tell—whether he understood any secret causes of a change so sudden—or whether he agreed with the general belief as to the King's apprehensions and dislikes, there is no saying. The one fact of the case avowed by Lord Melbourne was, that he was taken by surprise—the cordiality of the King towards himself having never been interrupted.

The event occasioned a prodigious sensation, abroad as well as at home. French politics were forgotten at Paris: and on the quays of New York, New Orleans, and Boston, men stood in groups to read the papers or discuss the news. Here was an experiment of a recurrence to principles of government which had been solemnly, and with much sacrifice on every hand, disavowed by the British nation. The most interesting spectacle to the world now was of the success or failure of the experiment. Those who looked at the weakness and faults of the Whig Administrations of the last four years believed it would succeed. Those who looked deeper—into the mind (so lately declared) of the English people—knew that it would fail. But the suspense was exciting and painful—more exciting and painful than people could believe a year afterwards: for it was not long before the Whigs were in again, with Lord Melbourne at their head, but not with Lord Brougham on the woolsack. Lord Brougham now finally left office, after having held the Great Seal four years. He did not, however, acquiesce at the moment in the relinquishment of all office. The Duke of Wellington could not fill up all the appointments for some time, as Sir Robert Peel's presence was indispensable; and Sir Robert Peel was at Rome: but the Lord Chancellor must clearly be Lord Lyndhurst; and he was appointed at once—on the 21st of November. Lord Brougham immediately wrote to him, to offer to take, without salary, the office of Chief Baron, actually held by Lord Lyndhurst. The application did not succeed. Lord Lyndhurst could say nothing till the return of Sir Robert Peel; and before that return, Lord Brougham had withdrawn his request. The public voice on this act was not to be mistaken. Lord Brougham pleaded that his intention was to save 12,000*l.* a year to the country, and to spare suitors the evils of a double appeal: but this last object, of the abolition of the Vice Chancellorship, he had not pursued during the four years when the power of Chancery Reform was in his hands; and, as for the saving of salary, the general feeling was that it would have been no compensation for the evil of the "political immorality," of taking office under the Conservatives, in a manner which indicated confidence in their remaining in power. Lord Brougham therefore withdrew his application; but not before the act had affected his political reputation in foreign countries, where all preceding inconsistencies had been allowed for, or unrecognised.

RETIREMENT OF LORD BROUGHAM.

LORD LYNDHURST SUCCEEDS.
Annual Register, 1834, p. 336.

Lord Brougham's Letter to Bulwer, December, 1834.

In reviewing his four years of office, the most agreeable point to dwell upon is his activity in his function, and in the cause of Law Reform. In the summer of 1830, he had brought forward a Bill for the establishment of Courts of Local Jurisdiction in certain districts, intended to apply afterwards to the whole of the kingdom. By this measure it was hoped that justice would be rendered cheap and easy of attainment in a number of cases where it could not be had by multitudes, unless brought near their doors. As soon as he was in office—in December, 1830—Lord Brougham brought forward this measure in the House of Peers, where it was laid on the table for consideration, being, as Lord Lyndhurst testified, an affair of the very highest importance—one consideration being that it would create fifty new Courts, with fifty new judges and their establishments. To the great grief of its author, and of all who intelligently wished that justice should be accessible to every citizen, this which was called, both lightly and seriously, the Poor Man's Bill, was thrown out by the Lords on the 9th of July, 1833. The rejection of the measure was believed to be owing to the fear that it would draw away too much business from the higher Courts, impose too much expense, and yield too much patronage. In the session of 1833, Lord Brougham brought in a Bill, which was passed by the Commons on the 22nd of August, for abolishing thirteen offices in the Court of Chancery, and reducing others, effecting altogether a saving of about 70,000*l.* Lord Eldon did not think he

LORD BROUGHAM'S LAW REFORMS.

LOCAL COURTS BILL.

Hansard, xix. 372.

CHANCERY REFORM.
Hansard, xx. [illegible]

Life of Lord Eldon, iii. 187

1834.

Works, iii. 129.

Annual Register, 1834; Chron. 176.

Lord Brougham's Letter to Mr. Bulwer, December, 1834.

should be able to persuade himself to go down to Parliament again—he had, as God knew, too little strength to spend on an attendance utterly hopeless: and it weighed him down more than he could endure to observe what was going on there, and how. This was written while waiting upon the progress of this Bill, "vindicating his own conduct" the while, and objecting "to the haste" with which Parliament was abolishing thirteen sinecures which had flourished under his own eye. Alas! there was other haste to object to—in the Chancellor's judicial function. The clearance of business that he effected in the Court of Chancery was such as to make his predecessor feel as if the "iron mace," that Sydney Smith spoke of, were swinging about his ears. "For twenty-five long years," said Sydney Smith, just after the coming in of the Grey Ministry, "did Lord Eldon sit in that Court, surrounded with misery and sorrow, which he never held up a finger to alleviate. The widow and the orphan cried to him, as vainly as the town crier cries when he offers a small reward for a full purse: the bankrupt of the Court became the lunatic of the Court; estates mouldered away, and mansions fell down; but the fees came in, and all was well. But in an instant, the iron mace of Brougham shivered to atoms this house of fraud and of delay." And it is true that from that hour we have heard no more of the delays in the Court of Chancery being ruinous to property, as well as trying to the patience. It is true, also, that there was at the time, and has been since, much impugning of the quality of the judgments which were dispensed so industriously and so promptly. However this may be—whatever might be true about Lord Brougham's qualifications for such a post of judicial decision—there can be no question of the benefit to the country, after so long a rule of Lord Eldon's, of the clearance which was made by Lord Brougham. At another period, the quality of the judge's law must be the first consideration: then, and for once, there was something more important—that racked minds should be eased, and unsettled minds certified; that a vast amount of deteriorating property should be restored to use and good management—and that the reproach of the highest Court of the realm—the reproach of being a bottomless pit of perdition—should cease. In Lord Brougham's farewell to the Court, on the 21st of November, he said, after lamenting the compulsion which obliged him to give up the seals in haste, "I have the greatest satisfaction in reflecting that this Court, represented by its enemies as the temple of discord, delay, and expense, has been twice closed within the space of five months." He went on to ascribe the merit of this to the Vice Chancellor and late Master of the Rolls, and also to the Bar; but these functionaries all existed in Lord Eldon's days, and did not save the Court from its reproach. Lord Brougham was himself the spring of their activity, as Lord Eldon had been the check upon it: and Lord Brougham was doubtless entitled to the satisfaction he naturally expressed on this parting occasion. As for the rest, it is not necessary here to enter into the controversy between himself and his contemporaries as to the share he had in promoting some good measures and defeating others. "I should be only fatiguing you," he wrote to Mr. Bulwer, "were I to name the other measures of large and uncompromising reform with which my name is connected." There were indeed many popular interests in former years with which his name was connected; and it should not, and will not, be forgotten, amidst speculations on his short official career, that in early and unpromising days, the most conspicuous advocate of political reforms, and of education, and the most effectual denouncer of negro slavery, and of tyranny in every form, was the Henry Brougham who, in 1834, was sighing for that position among Commoners, in which he had won his fame. At public meetings in London, and latterly in Scotland, he earnestly put forward his regrets that he had ever quitted the scene of his triumphs, the House of Commons, and his longing to "undo the patent" of his nobility: and there were many who lamented that he should ever have left the ranks of opposition. Such now hailed his retirement from office, and the clear indications of circumstances that the retirement was final: for they had a lingering expectation that, though in another House, he might resume his old habits, and be again the hope of the oppressed, and a terror to tyranny in high places.

Retirement of Lord Spencer.

Lord Althorp, now become Lord Spencer, was thus soon at liberty to enter upon the privacy he sighed for. He never returned to office. Perhaps no man ever left the House of Commons and an official seat about whom there was so little difference of opinion among all parties. Nobody supposed him an able statesman: and nobody failed to recognise his candour, his love of justice, his simplicity of heart, and his kindliness and dignity of temper and manners.

CHAPTER XIII.

1830.

AFFAIRS OF FRANCE.

THE affairs of France during this period were only less interesting to the English than their own; and the proceedings of England were commented on by French statesmen of every party from day to day. English Conservatives found cause for apprehension, during the whole struggle for Reform, that we were proceeding *pari passu* with the revolutionists of France; and English liberals watched with interest whether it was so, while French affairs were undecided. The eyes of the world were fixed on Louis Philippe, Duke of Orleans, from the moment when he accepted the office of Lieutenant General of the kingdom, before Charles X. and the Dauphin sent in their abdication, and set forth for exile. This Louis Philippe, whose father had died on the scaffold in the first Revolution, who had known the depths of poverty, and been long lost in obscurity, was now at the head of the French nation; and it was a spectacle of eager interest how he would conduct himself there. He had walked, almost bare-footed, over the Alps, and had taught mathematics in a school in Switzerland. He had lived humbly on the banks of the Thames: he had been a modest resident in Philadelphia, where he had fallen in love with a lady whose father refused his addresses as a match too inferior for his daughter: and he was now the centre of order in France, and the hope of all who craved the continuance of monarchy, and also of those who desired a safe and firm republic. The abdication of the King was placed in his hands at eleven o'clock of the night of the 2nd of August; and the next day, he opened the session of the Chambers, which met punctually according to the order of the late King, given some months before.

THE DUKE OF ORLEANS.

His speech declared his disinclination to his present prominent position, but his willingness, as that position was assigned him by the will of the nation, to accept all its consequences—all the consequences of a free government. He pointed out to the Chambers the subjects which it was necessary for them to consider first; and especially the fourteenth article of the Charter, of which the late Ministers had availed themselves to assume that the King had a power beyond the law, when a crisis should render the observance of the law incompatible with regal rule. While delivering this speech, he stood on the platform covered with crimson velvet, strewn over with golden fleurs-de-lis, and with the tricoloured flag waving over his head. It was observed that he left the royal chair vacant, and took the lower seat on the right of the throne, while his second son took that on the left. His duchess and her daughters were present in a gallery, provided for the purpose; and every one remarked the expression of mournful gravity in the countenance of the anxious wife—the expression which has marked that countenance to this day.

Annuaire Historique, 1830, p. 195.

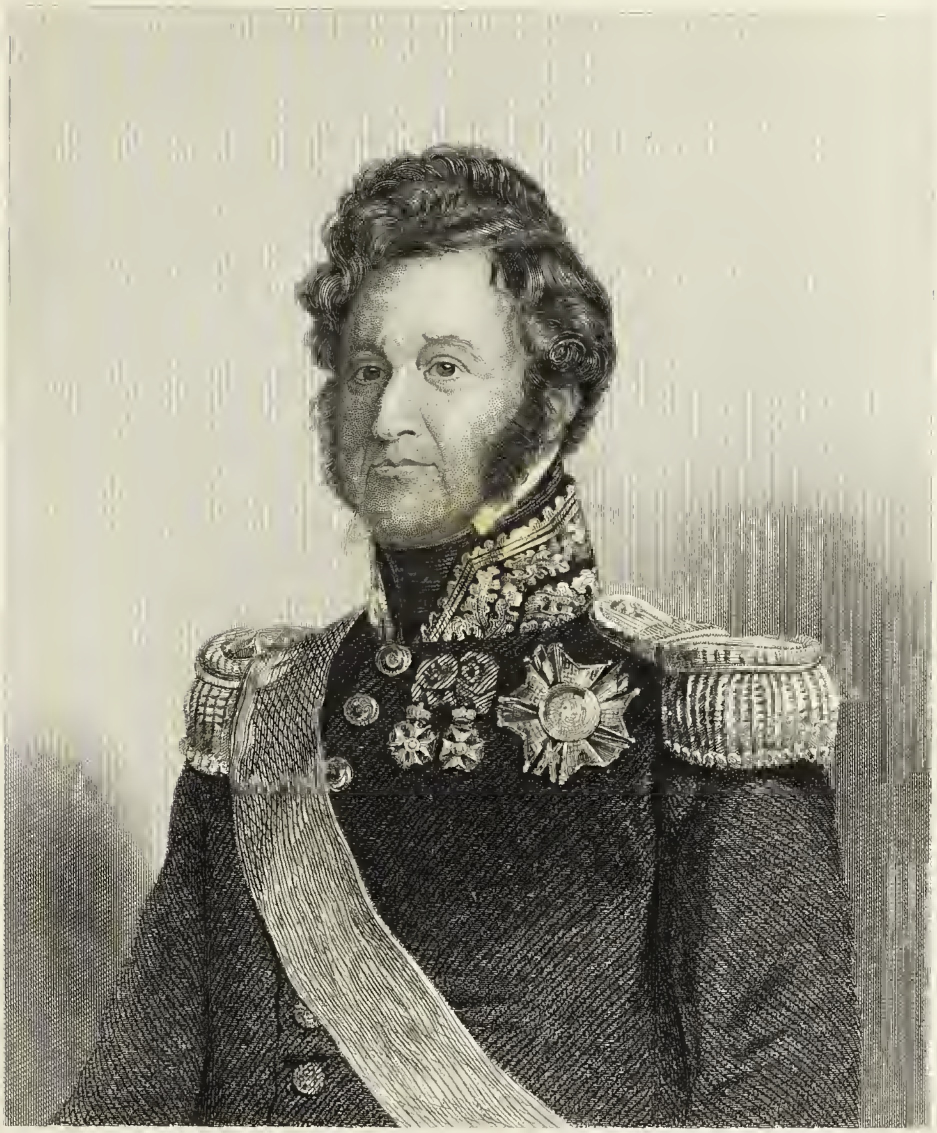
1830.

The Chambers were not satisfied with considering the fourteenth article of the Charter. There was much besides which must be changed; for what was needed now was not the Charter with a new executive; but one declaratory of such new principles as would be a better safeguard than the last had been. The preamble, for instance, declared the Charter to be a gift from the King to his people: and, if this had ever been true, it was not so now. The whole must be revised. It was revised; and never, perhaps, had a work of so much importance been done so rapidly. The venerable Lafayette, Commander-in-Chief of the National Guard, kept watch over the Deputies to prevent their being disturbed. Vast crowds outside shouted day and night for their various objects, and especially for the abolition of the hereditary peerage: but Lafayette stood between them and the legislature, and permitted no disturbing influences to penetrate to the Chamber of deliberation. On the night of the 6th, the whole was prepared. The throne was declared, by the new preamble, vacant by the forfeiture of the whole elder branch of the Bourbons. By alterations in the Charter, all Christian denominations of religion were ordained to be supported by the State; and in the following December, the Jewish religion was added. The censorship of the press was abolished for ever. The King was declared to have no power to suspend the laws, or to dispense with their execution. No foreign troops were to be taken into the service of the State without an express law. The age of eligibility to the Chamber was fixed at thirty. These were the alterations: and the Charter, thus amended, was placed under the protection of the National Guard and the citizens of the empire. By a special provision, the peerages conferred by the late King were annulled, and the question of a hereditary peerage was reserved for consideration in the session of 1831. Two peers degraded by this special provision were immediately reinstated—Marshal Soult and Admiral Duperre. Several peers recorded their protest against this act of the Lower Chamber which concerned them; and the whole peerage question stood over to the next session.

The Charter.

There was not, perhaps, a more anxious mind in France than that of Lafayette between the 3rd and the 9th of August. He was a republican, and he could now have established a republic: but whether France, as a whole, desired it, and whether the French people were fit for it, he could not decide; and the necessity of making a decision was an occasion of great anguish to him. He afterwards believed that he had decided wrong in offering the throne to Louis Philippe; and he never again knew what it was to have an easy mind. His last words, spoken from his pillow, declared his conviction in a phrase which cannot be recorded while the head on which he placed the crown is dishonoured, but not laid low in death. It was on the night of the 6th of August, as we have seen, that the Deputies finished their work. Whether Lafayette hoped or feared delay in the Upper Chamber, there was none. On the 7th, the Peers passed the measure—only ten being dissentient on any part but that relating to their own order. The old royalist Chateaubriand objected to the throne being declared vacant while the infant son of the Duke de Berri lived: but these were no times for a child to occupy the throne; and the exclusion of the whole of the elder branch of the Bourbons was a point on which the nation at large was determined. Lafayette's time

Annuaire His. 1830, p. 245.



H. H. Meyer, sc.

LOUIS PHILIPPE.

King of the French.

1830.

Four Marshals of France now brought the crown and sceptre, and other insignia of royalty, with which they invested the new King. As he returned with his family to the Palais-Royal, escorted by the National Guard, the multitude extended to the remotest points within view: and, of that sea of heads, all eyes were fixed upon the Citizen King. At the same moment, the displaced family were taking their way, neglected and forlorn, to the coast, the very peasants on the road scarcely looking up at them as they passed.

For a while—a very little while—all looked gay and bright about the new royal family—except the countenance of the mournful Queen. She and her daughters visited in the hospitals the wounded of the days of July. The King invited to his table members of the deputations which came to congratulate him on his courage in accepting the crown. Sometimes there were officers of the National Guard, sometimes students from the colleges, sometimes municipal dignitaries from the provinces, sitting down to dinner with the King and his many children, like a large family party. These children were idolized. Together with caricatures of the exiled family were handed about prints of the Orleans group, each member of which was made beautiful, noble, or graceful. All this was very natural. A fearful oppression had been removed: the revolution had been nobly conducted, and now, there was a bright new hope to gladden many hearts. But under all this there were the elements of future trouble; and distress was already existing to a fearful extent. The pains and penalties of revolution were upon the people, and, amidst all the rejoicing, there was stagnation of trade, depression of commercial credit, and hunger among the operative classes. Higher in society, there was a beginning of that conflict between the parties of movement and resistance which is a necessary consequence of political convulsion. Before the end of the year, two Administrations had been in power; the first containing originally but one member of the Movement party, but being presently rendered a coalition government; and the second being perpetually in collision with the Chamber of Deputies. The executive was kept in continual anxiety by seditious movements which took place, in capital or country, at short intervals. The royal family, besides its share in all these interests, had to endure a great shock in the suicide of the Duke de Bourbon, the last of the Condés. He had been one of the Bourbon exiles, and retained the prejudices of his party: and whether his suicide was owing to his grief at the Revolution, or to domestic miseries, it was most painful to the family of the new King, to one of whose sons he bequeathed the greater part of his wealth, under domestic influences of a dishonourable character. Thus, amidst much gloom and apprehension, closed the year of the Revolution, leaving much to be done and endured during the next.

Disquiet.

Suicide of the Duke de Bourbon.

1831.

Annuaire Hist. 1831, p. 81.

Disturbance in Paris.

In February, a most alarming disturbance took place in Paris, which ended in the sacking of a church, and the destruction of the Archbishop's palace. The anniversary of the assassination of the Duke de Berri was kept by a religious service, notwithstanding a warning from the Archbishop of Paris of the danger of such an appeal to political passions. Some one fastened a print of the little Duke de Bourdeaux on the drapery of the funeral car in the church, and placed over it a crown of everlastings. The crown was pulled to

1831.

pieces by royalists who were anxious to wear its blossoms next their hearts. Murmurs spread, and the excitement was presently such as to call for the clearance of the church by the National Guard. But the people outside turned their indignation against the priest and the Archbishop, who might have prevented this royalist scandal; and the mob rose against the church and the palace, and destroyed also the Archbishop's country-house. One consequence of this riot was that the fleur-de-lis now disappeared altogether. It had been twined round the crosses in the churches and elsewhere, to symbolize the union of devotion and loyalty: and now it was found that if they were not separated, the cross would be made to share the fate of the "flowers of kings." The government charged itself with stripping the crosses of their lilies: the Seal of State was altered, and the fleur-de-lis was proscribed thus soon after those who had worn it. Before the year was out the Chambers had decreed the perpetual banishment of the elder branch of the Bourbons, and the sale of all their effects within six months. The same measure was dealt out to the family of Napoleon.

Constitution of the Chambers.

As for the other measures of the parliament, the most important regarded the constitution of the two Chambers. The Hereditary Peerage was abolished; and the power of the King to nominate Peers was restricted within certain defined classes of persons, under declared conditions of fortune and length of service. It is difficult to see what remained after this, to make a Peerage desirable—at least, without a change of name. To sit in an Upper House, and be graced by the Sovereign, might be an honour; but it is one altogether apart from all former ideas of Peerage. It was easy to carry this Bill through the Chamber of Deputies: but what was to be done next? There was no doubt of a majority in the Upper House against the abolition of the hereditary principle. It was necessary to create Peers for the occasion; and there was a creation of thirty-six. The Liberals were as angry as the Peers at this proceeding, which they considered illegal and tyrannical. The plea of the government was the singular nature of the emergency. The Peers showed their wrath in sullen silence: the Liberals in clamour. During the whole proceeding, scarcely a sound was heard in the Upper Chamber. The voting was conducted, as nearly as possible, as it would have been in an assembly of the dumb. The majority by which the Hereditary Peerage was abolished in France was thirty-three. One touching incident which followed upon this act was that thirteen Peers sent in to the President of their Chamber, a week or two afterwards, their abdication of their rank and privileges. In their letters, they assigned as their reason the abolition of the hereditary principle. The President received the letters, but refused to read them aloud. In considering the conduct of the British House of Lords with regard to the Reform Bill, it should be borne in mind what was passing in France. When there was a threat of a large creation of Peers to carry the Bill, it was by a natural association of ideas that British noblemen, seeing what was doing at Paris, apprehended the abolition of their hereditary dignities, and looked upon their eldest sons as too likely to become Commoners, while the family titles and honours would either expire, or be given to some stranger, as the reward of public service, to pass at his death to some other stranger. That

Abolition of the Hereditary Peerage.

Annuaire Historique, 1831, p. 333.

such were the apprehensions of some nobles at home, while the thing was actually done in France, there can be no doubt; nor ought there to be much wonder.

Electoral Law.

The new Electoral Law, the French Reform Bill, was the most important subject of all that had occurred since the days of July. The number of electors to the Chamber of Deputies had hitherto been about 94,000 for the whole kingdom; and their qualification had consisted in the payment of yearly taxes to the amount of 300 francs (12*l.*). The Ministers proposed to double the number, taking the electors from the largest taxpayers. The project was not approved; and, after much debate, the Bill that was carried provided a constituency somewhat exceeding 200,000, in a population of 30,000,000, the qualification being lowered to the payment of 9*l.* per annum in taxes. That a constituency so small should have satisfied a people who had achieved a revolution for the sake of it, indicates that the principle of a representative system of government was little understood as yet in France. There was one, however, who understood it but too well: and that was the King. He now sanctioned the law; and, from this first year of his reign to its last day, he was employed in virtually narrowing the constituency, and extending his own power over it by means of patronage, till, in the imminent peril that the representation would become as mere a mockery as in the time of his predecessor, his strong hand of power was snatched away from the institution which he had grasped for his own purposes. In 1831, however, he accepted the new Electoral Law, and congratulated his people on the enlargement of their representative rights.

Parties.

Nothing in the record of this period is more interesting to us now than to read the declarations on the principles of the politics of the day made by two men, conspicuous in that and in a later revolution—the King and M. Guizot. M. Guizot was a member of the King's first Administration, and of his last. We find on record the opinions of both, in this first year of the revolution, on the character of the two great parties—of the Movement and of Resistance. On the opening of the new Chamber in July of this year, M. Guizot declared himself to be, where it was the business of the government to be, between these two parties. After declaring that the Resistance—the Conservative—party would be gradually won upon by the blessings of good government, he said to the Chamber, "The other is the party that you have to deal with. That party, which I will not call the republican, but the bad revolutionary party, weakened and exhausted, is, at this time, thank God, incapable of repentance and amendment. The revolution of July is all that there was good, sound, and national in our first revolution; and the whole converted into a government. This is the struggle which you have to maintain—between the revolution of July—that is, between all that is good, sound, and national from 1789 to 1830, and the bad revolutionary party—that is, the rump of our first revolution, or, all that there was of bad, unsound, and anti-national, from 1789 to 1830." The King, in a speech in answer to a provincial address, in the early part of the year, had given his view of this matter, in terms familiar at this day to all who have ears: "We endeavour to preserve the just medium (*juste milieu*), equally distant from the excesses of popular power on the one hand, and the abuses of royal power on the other." This phrase, "un juste

Annuaire Hist. 1831, p. 242.

Annuaire Hist. 1831, p. 54.

1831. milieu," thus creditable in its origin, became discredited by subsequent events. It was from this moment indissolubly associated with the policy of the King and his Cabinet; and it presently came to share their disgraces. After having for years heard it used as the nickname of a tampering and hypocritical despotism, it is interesting to revert to the origin of this familiar term.

1832.

Press Prosecutions.

From this time a cursory view of the politics of France presents little but a painful spectacle of a disguised conflict between the King and his people. In 1832, the King began his prosecutions of the press, which were carried on for the rest of his reign to such an extent as makes the historical reader wonder that they were endured so long as they were. It was not only that newspapers were watched over and punished for their political articles, but that paragraphs in ridicule or censure of the King himself were laid hold of, and the authors subjected to cruel imprisonment. It required no small courage to brave such hatred as the King incurred when, for a libel against himself, he snatched a young man from his bride and his home, and shut him up for a term of years—the victim fainting three times while his head was shaved on his entering his prison after sentence. When such punishments were inflicted by tens, by fifties, the King could not expect to be beloved, even by those to whom the name of Public Order was most sacred. And he showed no sign of a desire to be beloved, but only to preserve order by the means which seemed to him best. The excuse of his libellers was, that he merged his function of King in that of Minister—that he did not reign, but govern; and that he had therefore no right to complain of the same amount of criticism and comment which would be put up with by any one of his Ministers. He chose, however, to be both Minister and King, and he compelled others, as well as himself, to take the consequences. Within three years of the accession of Louis Philippe, the number of prosecutions of the press on the part of the government was 411. Out of this number, there were 143 condemnations. This was not exactly the method of government that the nation had hoped to obtain by their revolution: but they bore with more than could previously have been expected. They were weary of changes and tumults; and thankful to be spared the expense and burden of war. In the hope that the resources of the country would improve under a peace-policy, like that of Louis Philippe, the great middle classes of France were willing to bear with much, in order to gain time, and wait for natural change. The discontents of the injured therefore showed themselves in acts without concert—in attacks on the King's life, and libels against his character; and in occasional insurrections. Among the most formidable of these were two in 1832—one in Paris, on occasion of the funeral of General Lamarque, and supposed to be the work of the republican party; and the other in La Vendée, for the purpose of restoring the old branch of the Bourbons in the person of the Duc de Bourdeaux, whose mother conducted the insurrection. During the revolt in Paris, the capital was declared in a state of siege; on the legality of which there were endless discussions afterwards—hurtful to the influence of the government. The provincial insurrection was put down, and the Duchess de Berri taken prisoner. The affair ended in a manner most mortifying to the exiled family, and ludicrous in all other eyes. The devoted mother, the widow of the murdered prince, the pathetic symbol in her own person of the woes of the

Annual Register, 1833, p. 243 (note).

Insurrections.

1832.

Annuaire His. 1833, p. 270.

banished line, gave birth to an infant in prison, and was thereby compelled to avow a private marriage in Italy. Every body laughed at this proof of a divided devotion, and the heroine was allowed, on her recovery, to go where she would. She did not go to Holyrood, to meet the reproaches of the sufferers whom she had made ridiculous.

1833.

Fortification of Paris.

Annuaire Hist. 1833, p. 281.

It was after these revolts that the vigilant among French patriots observed with uneasiness the stealthy progress of measures for fortifying Paris. Strong works were rising in commanding positions round the capital: and when inquiry was made, the name of Napoleon was put forth by Marshal Soult. Napoleon had resolved to fortify Paris; and had fixed on these very positions. But then, it was answered, that was during the Hundred Days, when he had reason to apprehend attacks from all the world. France was not now in apparent danger of invasion from any quarter: and the vigilant intimated their suspicion that these fortifications were intended to be held, not for but against Paris. In 1833, the Minister required from the Chamber, when he brought in his Budget, a grant of 2,000,000 francs (above 83,000*l.*) for carrying on the works. The Deputies protested against a series of detached forts, and demanded that, if there were any fortifications at all, they should be in the form of circuit walls, which might be manned, against a foreign enemy, by the National Guard or the citizens. The government held to its right to fortify the towns of the kingdom in its own way, without being called to account about the method; and the Chamber refused the amount by a large majority. The works, however, proceeded: the vigilance of the citizens increased: there was reason to apprehend a forcible demolition of these works—raised by invisible funds: and at length the workmen were dismissed, and all was quiet for a time.

1834.

Characteristics of the Reign.

In the affairs of government, however, there was no quiet. There were several changes of Ministry during the year 1834—more suppression of Journals and Political Societies; more riots in Paris and Lyons; and at one time, some danger of a war with the United States, about a money claim which France at last hastened to satisfy, to avoid war. The King made more and more advances towards being the sole ruler of the country, with mere servants under him in the name of Ministers. The substantial middle class grew more and more afraid of disturbance, the longer they enjoyed the blessings of external order. They escaped the qualms of a consciousness of their having bartered freedom for quiet, by endeavouring, as much as possible, to avoid the whole subject of politics. Those who felt the despotism, in their consciences, intellects, and affections, became disheartened under this apathy and contentedness of the middle classes, and stirred less and less under the incubus. It was no wonder that the King himself, and large classes of his people, and almost all foreigners, believed that his system was completely succeeding—that he had found out the way to govern the French—and that his reign would be memorable in history as the close of a long period of disturbance—memorable for its strengthening success from the beginning onwards, and for its peaceful close. Yet there were men in England at that date—sensible and moderate men—who said that Louis Philippe might possibly, though not probably, die a King: but that if he did, he would be the last: and that no son of his would ever be King of the French. At the close

1834.

of this period, however, he seems himself to have been satisfied with his progress, and sincerely believing that he was doing what was best for the people under his care. By a rapid and perpetual extension of functionarism—by planting officials all over the country to do the work of central departments seated in Paris—he was casting a net over France, by means of which he could draw the representation into his own hands, and govern with ever improving unity of plan—still and always for the nation's own good. Thus it seems to have been with France at the close of 1834.

Death of Lafayette.

In the course of this year, a silent censor was removed—a witness of old times whose presence was a perpetual rebuke to a Citizen King engaged in fortifying Paris. Lafayette died in May, and was laid in the ground without commotion—owing partly to the strong force of soldiery sent to the spot on the pretext of military honours to the deceased, and partly to the timidity and apathy which had grown on the middle classes A vast multitude, orderly and silent, attended the funeral; and there was no discourse at the grave. It was left to other countries to pronounce his funeral discourse; and it was done, as by one impulse, by all whom he had assisted to political freedom, from the western boundaries of America to the depths of Germany. The reputation of Lafayette, both in its nature and extent, is as striking a tribute to virtue as can be furnished by any age. In him were collected all virtues but those which require high intellectual power for their development: and he was at least as much adored as any such idols of the time as had more intellectual power and less virtue. It was a misfortune to the world that his magnanimity had not as much of strength as it had of purity; for he was repeatedly placed in those critical positions when an individual will, put forth at a moment's warning, decides the destiny of a nation. On such occasions, he showed himself weak ; and, through the same irresolution, such services as he rendered to his country were of a somewhat desultory nature, and seldom fully successful. But the love in which he was held showed that, for once, a man was estimated by the true rule—by what he was, and not by what he did. He could not achieve great enterprises; but he could meet danger anywhere, endure loathsome imprisonment at Olmütz, protest against wrong in the French Convention, fight under Washington for American independence, decline the headship of the republic in France, in order to put the crown on the head of Louis Philippe; and when he found that he had therein committed an error, retire to his farm, to end his life in humility and silence. He could pass through a life of 76 years without showing a sign of selfish ambition, or any other kind of cupidity. He traversed a purgatory of human passions without a singe from any flame, or a single flutter of fear in his heart; the angel of compassion walking with him as his guard in that furnace. His goodness so clothes his whole image to men's eyes that they forget his rank, and do not inquire for his talents; and, in our age and state of society, this is the strongest possible testimony to the nobleness of his character. Lafayette was born of a noble family in Auvergne, in 1757, and early married a lady of rank equal to his own. He died, in his 77th year, on the 20th of May, 1834.

Annuaire Hist. 1834, p. 253.

1830.

Separation of Belgium and Holland.

At the very first revolutionary stir in Europe, Belgium began to move. The arbitrary union of Holland and Belgium had never answered; and Belgium

1830. was now bent on its being dissolved. There was no power of compulsion existing which could enforce a longer union against the will of a nation, however small, which was unanimous in a desire to live by itself, and after its own manner: so, after much marching and counter-marching of the Prince of Orange and his troops, and the rising of an insurgent army, and messages from the King, and consultations of the States General, and a grand concluding bombardment of Antwerp, which called in the Allies to interfere, the independence of Belgium was declared at Brussels, in November, 1830; a monarchical government was decided on, and a vote of exclusion passed against the House of Orange. The Dutch people showed no particular reluctance to the separation; and there was therefore nothing to be done but to give up Antwerp to the Belgians, and leave them to settle their own affairs. It is somewhat amusing at this day to the English traveller to hear at Rotterdam the carping statements of Dutch merchants, and to witness their eagerness to disparage the trade of Antwerp; and at Antwerp to see the efforts made to exhibit its small commerce to the best advantage. It is, on a large scale, the spectacle of a village shop-partnership dissolved in a quarrel, where each party keeps a watch over his neighbour's custom, and is sure he cannot live by it, while neither wishes that the two concerns should come together again. The rest of the world hopes that there may be business enough for both; and in the separation of Holland and Belgium, both had the good wishes of England. The Dutch heir-apparent had been educated by an English Archbishop, and had been a suitor for the hand of the Princess Charlotte—a suitor refused only by herself, and not from any ill-will in other quarters; and the Prince finally chosen by the Belgians to be their new King was the husband of the Princess Charlotte, and the uncle of the presumptive heiress of the British throne. Thus was England in amity with both countries when Prince Leopold became King of the Belgians. There was trouble for some time afterwards, from the difficulty that was naturally found in bringing the Dutch government to acquiesce in the new arrangements, and from some fear that France and England might have to sustain the cause of Belgium against Holland, supported by the other Allied Powers. It was by French arms at last that the citadel of Antwerp was compelled to evacuate its Dutch garrison. France was by this time closely united to the interests of Belgium. The King of the French refused the sovereignty for his son, the Duke de Nemours, to whom it was offered at the beginning of the struggle: but he gave his eldest daughter to share the throne of Belgium with Leopold, the marriage taking place in the autumn of 1832.

Prince Leopold accepts the Belgian Crown.

1830. Brunswick. It was in the autumn of 1830, that the little Duchy of Brunswick threw off the annoyance of its turbulent young ruler. By advice of the British and other sovereigns, the brother of the absconding Duke assumed his place and government, according to the invitation of his subjects.—Saxony. In Saxony, the cry for various reforms was so strong that the King, an indolent devotee, associated his nephew with him in the government, as joint Regent, the young man's father, Duke Maximilian, passing over in his favour his own right of succession to the throne.—Duke Frederick Augustus thus became the virtual ruler of Saxony.—Hesse Cassel. In Hesse Cassel, the people were up, demanding and obtaining a constitution.—There was a dispute about the succession at Baden.— Baden.

1830.
Switzerland.
1831.
Italy.
1833.
Spain.
Death of the King.
Don Carlos.
Portugal.
1834.
Death of Don Pedro.
Marriage of the Queen of Portugal.
Her widowhood.

In Switzerland, the governments of the respective Cantons, threatened by the stir within and beyond their country, hastened to propitiate popular feeling by a reform of abuses, and amelioration of institutions, and a grant of stronger guarantees of liberty.—In the next year, there were insurrections in several of the Italian states; but the troops of Austria marched down, presently restored order, and precluded all ameliorations in the government.—In Spain, the King died in 1833, of apoplexy, occasioned by over-eating. His little daughter, then three years old, was declared Queen, under the Regency of her mother, that Christina of whom France and England have since had occasion to know so much. These two governments were the first to acknowledge the young Queen of Spain. The other governments of Europe kept aloof till it could be seen what would become of Don Carlos, the Pretender, who had now been driven from the soil of Spain, and had taken refuge in Portugal. This Pretender was, for a course of years after this, of some consequence to England; for he served as a last refuge for the sympathies and hopes of the extreme Tories, when disappointed of all that they desired and hoped at home. It is necessary for such sympathies, and for that royalist imagination which has in it much that is venerable and beautiful, to have some object on which to exercise themselves; and the world is seldom without some fugitive Prince, devoutly persuaded of his own right to some throne, who leads brave men with him, and is cheered on by romantic admirers from afar. There were now no more Stuarts; and Don Miguel, of Portugal, was too bad even for romance to advocate: but here was Don Carlos of Spain, whose case actually bore a dispute, who had lived among mountain fastnesses, and was now in exile, but likely to return; and here was the Whig administration espousing without hesitation, and in conjunction with revolutionary France, the cause of the infant Queen, and hastening to acknowledge her sovereignty. It was no wonder that a Peer here and there, and a few rich Commoners, seeing all going to wreck at home in the passage of the Reform Bill, retired to their estates, and there studied the map of Spain, and thence wrote to the Spanish Pretender accounts of the progress of revolution in England, and offers of sympathy, service, and hospitality, in case of need.—In Portugal, Don Pedro conducted the war against his guilty brother in person—amidst much hardship and many reverses, till, in 1834, having been assisted by British ships and a Spanish army, he drove the Usurper from the Peninsula, assembled the Cortes, was appointed to the Regency on the 28th of August, and died on the 22nd of September. Two days before his death, the Queen was declared of age by a decree of the Cortes, who feared to commit the powers of government to any other hand. Some steps had been already taken in regard to her marriage, and on the 1st of December she married the Duke de Leuchtenberg, the son of Eugene Beauharnois, and already a family connexion by marriage. The union seemed to promise well, as far as the character of the young man was concerned; but it was presently dissolved. The marriage had taken place by proxy: the Prince arrived in Portugal in February, and in March died of sore-throat occasioned by cold.

Egypt and Turkey.

These events in the West of Europe were interesting; but less so than what was going on in the East. The Pasha of Egypt was acquiring the possessions of Turkey almost as fast as his forces could march over them. Under the command of his adopted son and avowed heir, Ibraheem Pasha, his army had 1832. taken possession of the whole of Syria—perhaps not much to the discontent of the Syrians themselves—and by the end of 1832, the Egyptian general had passed the Taurus, on his way to Constantinople. The abasement of Turkey was extreme. It was this Egyptian vassal whose aid had supported her in her struggle with the Three Powers; and now, what could she do but appeal to Russia for assistance against her own vassal? The next year, she did so appeal, to the great annoyance of France and England, whose object was to keep Turkey out of the grasp of Russia. Mohammed Alee was remonstrated with; and he showed great moderation in the midst of some anger. He had made war only when the Porte had interfered with what he considered his right to conduct a quarrel of his own with a brother vassal—the governor of Acre. He made no difficulty about stopping the march of his army; but, before Ibraheem turned back, he had obtained from the Porte all that he chose to demand. Early in the summer of 1833, Mohammed Alee found himself master of all the provinces from the borders of Asia Minor to the unknown retreats of the infant Nile; and he had himself learned, and had shown the world, how easy it was to march upon Constantinople, and knock at the doors of the Sultaun's seraglio. It was of his own free pleasure that Ibraheem turned back now. He was soon seen in every part of the Syria he had won for his father, taking barbarous vengeance on his enemies, when so inclined, but, at the same time, building hospitals, repairing mosques, promoting agriculture, taking an interest in manufactures, and every where securing, with the whole force of his authority, toleration and good treatment of the Christians.

Russia had answered promptly and gladly to the appeal of the Porte for protection; but she had some engrossing affairs on her hands elsewhere. It was during the revolutionary autumn of 1830—that season of political earthquake—that the oppressions of the Russian Grand Duke Constantine at Poland. 1830. Warsaw became so intolerable, that it may be questioned whether they would not have produced the same results, whether the rest of Europe were on the stir or in a dead sleep. Some students of the Military School had drunk to the memory of Kosciusko, and other heroes. The Grand Duke caused two successive commissions to sit on this offence; and the decision being in each case, that there was no ground for punishment, the Grand Duke took the affair into his own hands, and, without warrant of law, ordered some of the youths to be flogged and others imprisoned. The young men rose: the Polish part of the garrison joined them; and then the townspeople began to act. Revolt. They helped themselves with arms from the arsenal, and aided in driving out the Russian soldiery, amidst fearful bloodshed, from the streets of Warsaw. It was on the 29th of November that the students rose; and on the 3rd of December, Constantine was travelling towards the frontier, having recommended all establishments, persons, and property, to the protection of the Polish nation.

In this short interval, six Polish nobles had taken the place of some obnoxious members in the Administrative Council, and had presented to the Grand Duke their propositions for various reforms, and their demand for the fulfilment of the constitution. Every thing was still done in the name of the

1830.

Suspense.

Emperor. When Constantine set out on his journey home, it was thought at Warsaw so doubtful how the Emperor would receive the tidings of what had happened, that it would be as well to provide for defence, if he should be very angry. The Poles did not yet know Nicholas, and the character and power of his wrath. The day was coming when fierce torture of the heart and mind was to show what it was. It was nothing uncommon to be forming and exercising a force, as the Poles now were. They were a military people; and their organization had been kept up by Russia. The worst feature in their case was the absence of any port. They had no command of the sea, either for the arrival of aid, or for facility of escape. At the close of the year their prospect was an anxious one. If Russia should be incensed, Prussia and Austria would join her to put down the nuisance of Poland. But the die was cast. News must soon arrive. Meantime, the Commander-in-Chief, Klopicki, was made Dictator, in case of its being necessary to prosecute the rebellion. It was necessary. The first news from St. Petersburg was, that the Emperor promised to inflict signal vengeance for the "horrid treason" of the Poles.

Struggle.

And the Emperor kept his word. At the beginning of the year, 1831, his wrath was announced to the Polish nation; and at the beginning of February, his armies began to pass over the frontier. When it had become clear that Poland must declare for independence, the Dictatorship had been exchanged for a Council of State, consisting of a few of the most eminent patriots.

Defeat of the Poles.

Before the end of the year, all was over; the constitution of Poland was withdrawn: she was declared "an integral part of Russia:" her nobles were on the way to Siberia; her high-born ladies were delivered over for wives to the common soldiers on the frontier; her tenderly reared infants were carried away in waggon loads to be made Russians, and trained to worship the Czar. Polish law was abolished: the Polish language was prohibited: and the Emperor uttered his declaration to listening Europe, "Order reigns in Warsaw."

The spectacle of the conflict had been one of intense interest to the world outside. The struggle had been a brave, an able, and, under the circumstances, a long one: and there were times when the most anxious observers had some hope that the Poles might succeed. The word "hope" may be used here without reserve, because the sympathy was almost all on one side. The highest Conservatives might and did sympathize with the Polish rebels; for there were no higher Conservatives in the world than these Polish rebels themselves. If their deep-rooted conservatism, their intensely aristocratic spirit, had been understood by the Liberals of Europe and America from the beginning, there would perhaps have been less sympathy in their efforts, and certainly less hope of their success. It was not till long afterwards that the

Character of the Struggle.

discovery was made that the Poles had been fighting—for nationality, it is true—but not for national freedom: that they had not the remotest idea of giving any liberty to the middle and lower classes of their people; and that they carried their proud oligarchical spirit with them into the mines of Siberia, the drawing-rooms of London and Paris, and the retreats of the Mississippi Valley. This is not mentioned as a matter of censure, but of plain fact, which it is necessary to know, in order to the understanding of their case. They strove for all that they understood; and they did for the rescue of their nationality, all that bravery and devotedness could do. To contend for popular freedom was another kind of enterprise, of which they had no conception and for not understanding which, therefore, they cannot be blamed. But it is to this inability that their utter destruction is now, at last, seen or believed to be owing. They themselves impute their latter disasters to dissensions among themselves: and there were dissensions enough to account for any degree of failure. But it also seems clear that their cause was doomed from the beginning, from the absence of any basis of popular sympathy. The great masses were indifferent, or rather disposed in favour of Russian than of Polish rule. They did not know that they should be better off under a change, and they might be worse: so they let the armies pass their fields, and scarcely looked up as they went by. No cause could prosper under such a dead weight as this. This view, now generally taken, is borne out by the impressions left by the exiles in the countries where they have taken refuge. Every where, all homes, all hearts, all purses, have been open to them; for hard and narrow must be the hearts and homes that would not welcome and receive strangers so cruelly afflicted, and so insufferably oppressed: and every where the impression left seems to be the same—that the Poles undertook an enterprise for which they were not morally prepared. They could sacrifice their lives and fortunes; and they could fight bravely and most skilfully for any cause to which they would give the lustre of their arms. But something more than these things, fine as they are, is required to entitle men to the honour of the last contention for nationality:—an humble industry must be united to the magnanimous courage of the battle-field: aristocratic pride must be laid down when its insignia are thrown into the common cause: and the most intense hatred of tyranny is an insufficient qualification, if it be not accompanied by an answering enthusiasm for human liberties wherever there are human hearts to be ennobled by the aspiration. Many of the Polish exiles have caught something of this enthusiasm in the countries over which they have been scattered by their revolution: but it does not appear to have been the moving force of their struggle for nationality in 1831.

CHAPTER XIV.

1830—34.

Royalty in England.

THE accession of William IV. was really enjoyed by his people as affording exercise to their loyal feelings, and giving them the opportunity so dear to Englishmen of talking about royal doings, and obtaining an occasional glimpse of regality itself. Through the illness of George III. and the morbid fancies of his successor, royalty had for many years lived so retired as to be known only in its burdens and its perplexities. Now it came forth again, not only on Windsor Terrace, but into the very streets, and sometimes on foot—with friendly face and cordial manners. Amusing stories—amusing to most people, but shocking to Lord Eldon—were soon abroad of the curious liberties taken by forward and zealous people, in their delight at finding themselves not afraid of royalty. On one of the first occasions of their Majesties' going to the theatre in state, there was an exhibition of placards in gallery and pit, evidently by concert—placards bearing the words "Reform," and "Glorious King." At a word from a policeman, the placards were withdrawn: but here was a "revolutionary symptom" for the timid to exercise their apprehensions upon. The Coronation, which took place on the 8th of September, 1831, was a quiet affair, befitting the accession of a Sovereign who was humbly and reasonably aware that his reign must be short, and undistinguished by any energetic personal action. There was no banquet, and the royal procession returned through the streets at three o'clock. The King and his Ministers gave great dinners at home, and London was illuminated in the evening. There was one person, present in all minds, who was absent from the ceremony—she who was, in all probability, to fill the principal place at the next. It was given out that the state of the Princess Victoria's health made it desirable that she should remain in retirement in the Isle of Wight: and perhaps it was best, considering her tender age, and her peculiar position, that she should. She was only twelve years old; and, if certain authorities are to be trusted, had only within a year become fully aware that a regal destiny was before her.

Annual Register, 1831, Chron. 46.

The Coronation. Annual Register, 1831, Chron. 140.

The Princess Victoria.

It was now time that overt preparation for that destiny should be made, if it was to be done, as it ought to be done, gradually. In the next year, we see her beginning a series of tours, wherein were embraced all the good objects of health, of her becoming acquainted with the principal institutions, monuments, and scenes of the country of which she was to be Sovereign, and of her being inured to move in public. In 1831, the journey comprehended the singular old city of Chester, several cathedrals, some noblemen's seats, where the royal party were entertained, and ending with the University of Oxford. During these tours, the young princess, who at home was wont to walk out in thick shoes and a warm cloak, in all weathers, on a common or through fields and lanes, was familiarized with the gaze of a multitude, and with processions, addresses, and observances, such as she must hereafter be accustomed to for her whole life. The management was good; and we may suppose the recreation was pleasant; for it has been kept up. Of all royal recreations, there can be none more unquestionably good than that of an annual tour. If there is more dulness and constraint, and less intellectual freedom and stir, in royal life than in any other, this is a natural safeguard and remedy, as far as it goes. A large accession of ideas must accrue from annual travel; and there is no other method by which the distance between sovereign and people can be so much and so naturally diminished as by the sovereign going forth from the palace among universities and towns and villages, and scattered dwellers on wild heaths and the sea-shore. To those that hope that the practice and its pleasures may be renewed for many many years, it is interesting to mark its formal beginning, in the autumn of 1832.

ASSAULT ON THE KING.

Amidst all the alarms talked about by the anti-reformers during the "revolutionary period" under our notice, there was less danger and even disrespect to Majesty than has been common in much quieter times. It was impossible for a sovereign to incur the consequences of a change of mind about a course of policy to which he stood pledged without suffering more or less: but William IV. was gently dealt with, considering the circumstances. The utmost suspicion could not make out that his life was in danger from political discontents: and on the two occasions when his life was threatened, the ill-conditioned wretches who threw the stone and wrote the letter gave their private wrongs and wants as their excuse. On the first occasion, a depraved old pensioner, five times turned out of Greenwich Hospital for misconduct, thought he "would have a shy at the King," and put stones in his pocket for the purpose. At the first "shy," he struck the King on the forehead, as his Majesty was looking out of the window at Ascot races. But that he wore his hat, the King might have been seriously hurt. As it was, he was somewhat stunned, but presented himself again at the window before there was time for alarm. Though this happened at so critical a season as June, 1832, it was impossible for the most ingenious alarmist to connect it with politics.

Annual Register, 1832, Chron. 76; 1833, Chron. 27.

POPULAR IGNORANCE.

There is little in this period to yield comfort as to the state of popular enlightenment. The proceedings of the Dorsetshire labourers were marked by an astonishing barbarism. In introducing agricultural labourers into their union, they used death's heads, and hobgoblin mysteries, the very mention of which carries back the imagination five hundred years.—During the years 1831 and 1832, we find records of Enclosure Riots, of a formidable kind. In one place, the poor people fancied that fencing in boggy land was against the law altogether; and in another, that the law expired in twenty-one years from the first enclosure in 1808: and in both these instances, the levelling of fences went on, night after night, till nothing was left: and the soldiers were pelted, and exasperated proprietors were wounded, and a world of mischief done because the poor people knew no better than to suppose they were struggling for their rights.—Then, we have more Combination horrors—more ferocity towards capitalists, and tyranny over operatives, exercised by a very few worthless meddlers, who feasted on the earnings of the honest but unenlightened men whom they made their tools. We find the leaders of strikes

RIOTS.

1830—34.

cutting pieces out of the looms, and thrashing and stabbing men who were content with their wages, and only anxious to be left free to maintain their families by their own industry.—One of the most formidable riots of the time took place on the day appointed for a General Fast, on account of the cholera—the 21st of March, 1832. An ignorant and violent association, which called itself the Political Union of the Working Classes, and which subsisted for only a short time, failing in all its aims, raised a fearful mob-power by offering to feed the hungry with bread and meat, in Finsbury Square, instead of observing the Fast. Alarmed at their prospect when it was too late, they failed to appear; and no bread and meat were forthcoming. It is said that the assemblage of the hungry that day—amidst a season of deep distress—was enough to appal the stoutest heart. The emaciated frames and haggard faces were sad to see; but far worse was the wrath in their eyes at the mockery, as they conceived it, of an order to fast to avert the cholera, when here were above 20,000 poor creatures in danger of cholera from fasting and other evils of destitution. As their wrath and their hunger increased, and the women among them grew excited, conflicts with the police began; and before the multitude were dispersed to their wretched lurking places, more hungry than they came, there had been some severe fighting. More than twenty of the police were wounded, and many of the crowd.—The incitements to rick-burning, machine-breaking, and seizure of corn, addressed to the agricultural population in 1831 by Carlile and Cobbett, were so gross as would not have been dreamed of in any country where the barbarous ignorance of the rural labourers might not be confidently reckoned on. Whether it was wise in the government to prosecute these two profligate writers, affording thereby an effectual advertisement of their sedition, may be a question: but the trials stand out as an exposition of the popular barbarism, and the low demagoguism of the time.—The murders for the sake of selling bodies for dissection did not cease after the retribution on Burke and Hare, but rather increased—as it is usual for fantastic or ferocious crimes to do, while the public mind is strongly excited about them. The disappearance and proved murder of Italian boys and other homeless and defenceless beings was hastening the day when the law should be so altered as to permit Anatomy to find its own resources in a legal and recognised manner: and the settlement of the matter was further accelerated by an incident which fixed a good deal of attention in 1832. A woman who knew herself to be likely to die, and believed that her disease was an unusual one, desired her brother to deliver over her corpse to a public hospital, and to spend in charity what her funeral would have cost. The brother obeyed the directions. As it appeared that the law rendered interment necessary, the remains were buried from the hospital. The brother was brought before the Hatton Garden magistrate under a vague notion of his having done something shocking and illegal. On a full hearing on a subsequent day, it appeared that he and the officers of the hospital were entirely blameless; the magistrate closing the business by informing the prisoner "that he had not violated the laws of the country, but, on the other hand, had acted in strict accordance with them." As far as the public were concerned, the sister's memory was not left without its share of admiring gratitude. In the next session, Mr. Warburton introduced and carried a Bill, by which the provision

Annual Register, 1832, Chron. 40.

Annual Register, 1831, Chron. 18. 95.

Anatomy Bill.

2 & 3 Will. IV. c. 84. 3rd August, 1833.

for the dissection of bodies of murderers was repealed, and the association of disgrace with dissection thereby extinguished; and by which facilities were offered for anatomists to avail themselves of the wish or permission of dying persons and survivors, while abuse was excluded by a machinery of certificates and registration.

MEDICAL EDUCATION.

Annual Register, 1830, Chron. 151.

By this time, the imperfect character of medical education was beginning to be seen and admitted: and in 1830, we find great improvements in course of introduction by the Society of Apothecaries' Hall, and prescribed to students as regulations. In 1828, the student was not obliged to attend more than six courses of lectures: in 1829, it must be ten courses; in 1830, fourteen. There must be more hospital practice, and a more extended examination before candidates could be admitted to the profession. The subject of medical qualification was kept painfully before the public mind in this and two succeeding years by the results of the quack-practice of a young man, once a portrait-painter, named St. John Long, who believed that he had discovered an infallible ointment, and method of treating the sores that it caused. While mourning over the ignorance of the populace, we must not lose sight of that of the educated classes, as they are called. Long's patients were of the moneyed classes; and his rooms were besieged by ladies and gentlemen who supposed that one particular ointment would cure all their various complaints:—they adhered to their young doctor in the face of all the deaths that were taking place under his treatment; and when he died, in 1834, the "secret" of his ointment was sold for several thousand pounds. In September, 1830, an inquest was held on the body of a young lady who was one of the victims of his quackery; and in consequence of the verdict, Long was brought to trial, and convicted of manslaughter. Not the less for this, do we find him, the next February, on his trial again for the death of a healthy person, who had applied to him on account of a slight and common ailment, and who died in torture under his treatment in a month's time. On this trial the fact came out that Long was making 12,000*l.* a year. His plea in the present case was, the malice of his enemies, by which he was kept away from his patient in her last moments, when he should have recovered her. The jury, evidently not enlightened enough to see the ignorance shown in the principle of Long's practice, and naturally impressed by the array of gentry of "the highest respectability," who came forward to vindicate his qualifications, returned, after some delay, a verdict of Not Guilty: whereupon "several elegantly-dressed ladies went to the prisoner, and shook him cordially by the hand." The young man, who may have believed in his own specific, had only three years more in which to torture his patients, and let their flatteries and their guineas flow in upon him: but the spirit of quackery did not die with him, nor the propensity to it in his admirers—the ignorant of the "educated classes." Just at the time when Long was laid in his grave, an innkeeper at York was sentenced to six months' imprisonment for manslaughter of an invalid by administering the Morrison's Pills which have since sent so many to the churchyard before their time.—The thing wanted evidently is such an advance of physiological and medical knowledge as shall exalt that knowledge into real science. While the best medical practice is yet but empirical, there will be unqualified as well as educated empirics; and portrait-painters and inn-

Annual Register, 1831, 38.

1830—34. keepers, if they can but lay hold of a specific, may number their patients by thousands.

Criminal Trials. In the midst of the incendiarism of the Carliles and Cobbetts of the time, the popular respect for and trust in the law was enhanced by some incidents, otherwise purely painful, wherein justice was made to visit persons of "property and standing" as if they had had neither property nor standing. The never-ceasing and too just complaint that the friendless and over-tempted are punished with hardness and indifference, while the well-friended and educated, whose intelligence aggravates their offences, are, somehow or other, almost always let off, had been prevalent, as usual, when Captain Moir—"William Moir, gentleman,"—was tried, in 1830, for the murder of a man whom he had shot for trespass, very wantonly, and after repeated threats of mischief to his victim. Captain Moir was hanged, as simply as his victim would have been if the act of aggression had been reversed.—In the same year, a lady was convicted for shop-lifting, who actually carried on her person at the moment of the theft, the sum of 8,000*l.* in Bank notes and India bonds. She underwent her punishment. In this case, if insanity had existed, it must have been proved. All parties would have been too happy to admit the plea. It was no doubt one of those cases of strong propensity for which neither our education, law, nor justice makes provision. It is a case which makes the heart bleed: but if such are not allowed for among the poor, who have so little advantage of discipline, they cannot be among the rich, whose sin is in outrage of all restraining influences. The wretched woman of wealth suffered as if she had been a hungry mother, snatching a loaf for famishing children at home.—In the next year, a Scotch clergyman, "Minister of a Gothic chapel in Edinburgh, in high repute for his evangelical preaching," was tried on an extensive indictment for book-stealing, found guilty of eleven acts of theft, and transported for fourteen years.—To set against these acts of justice (in common phrase) were a few which went as far to weaken popular trust in the law as these to strengthen it. In a very gross case of shop-lifting in the autumn of 1832, by "two young ladies of high respectability," there was such collusion as caused the escape of the culprits: the father was forewarned of the warrant, "that he might not be taken by surprise," and so much time was given that the minds of all the prosecuting parties had changed, and no one would attempt to identify the thieves.—Far worse, however, were two cases, which happened near together, of erroneous verdicts and hasty sentences—cases so gross as must have made all the poor in the neighbourhood believe that a criminal trial was a sort of lottery, as they had long concluded the punishment of transportation to be. A man was convicted at Salisbury of threatening a neighbour by letter with a fire on his farm, the judge telling him, with severity, that his crime was certainly not mitigated by his denial after such evidence—"evidence which must satisfy every reasonable man,"—and passing on him a sentence of transportation for life. Presently, the prisoner's son came forward, and owned himself the writer of the letter, of which his father had no knowledge whatever. As more letters had been sent to neighbours, the sentenced man was tried on another accusation which enabled him to bring forward the new evidence of his innocence. He was "pardoned," as the insulting phrase is; and the son, a mere youth, trans-

Annual Register, 1830. Law Cases, 350.

Annual Register, 1830, Chron. 158.

Annual Register, 1831, Chron. 79.

Annual Register, 1832, Chron. 149.

Annual Register, 1831, Chron. 11.

ported for seven years.—The other case occurred only a few weeks afterwards, and was a very serious one. A receiver of stolen goods was convicted of having stolen them by an act of burglary, and sentenced to death, from which he was saved only by great exertions. It was the manifest insufficiency of the evidence which occasioned the efforts of those who saved him; and the whole affair was a disgrace.—While such a transaction as this was stimulating the growing disapprobation of capital punishments, on the ground of the tremendous risk to the innocent which they involve, the worthy magistrates of Inverness were taking another ground, in an application to the Lord Advocate. They exhibited their case:—that they had discharged their executioner; and that they would be subjected to very serious expense, if a man at present in custody on a charge of murder should be sentenced to be hanged. If this memorial had but been made sufficiently public at the time, who knows but that the abolition of capital punishments might have been much hastened by a general discharge of executioners?

Annual Register, 1831, Chron. 65.

STEAM IN THE EAST.

A Chinese advertisement was translated and sent to England at this time which excited a good deal of attention. The steamer King-fa, running between Canton and a northern port, carried cows, a surgeon, a band of music, and had rooms elegantly fitted up for opium smoking. It was now clear that the eastern seas were to become steam-highways; and it was time that the English were assuming the lead, in this as in other enterprises of world-wide interest. We find therefore trial made at Blackwall, in 1834, of an iron steam-boat, to be used as a towing-vessel on the Ganges: and in the same year, an application from the India merchants to government to establish a regular communication from Malta to Alexandria, in order to facilitate their correspondence with India. In the course of the negotiation, we find that a steamer or a man-of-war was sent from Bombay up the Red Sea "about once a year," and their Lordships of the Admiralty could not think of going to any expense unless something more was done on the Bombay side. The face of things has changed in the Mediterranean and the eastern seas since that date.

CONVEYANCE OF MAILS.

A passion of admiration at the marvels and privileges of railway conveyance runs through the records of this period. We are told of the coaches superseded, of the number of passengers and weight of parcels carried—the speed, the ease, the safety: "but one fatal accident in eighteen months:" and of a railway opened between Leeds and Selby, in 1834. A singularly interesting passage is found, under the date 1832, in Mr. Babbage's "Economy of Machinery and Manufactures," wherein we see shadowed forth in one suggestion two of the mightiest enterprises of our time. After indicating the vast increase which might be looked for in epistolary correspondence, if the time and cost of letter-carrying could be reduced, Mr. Babbage invites us to imagine a series of high pillars, erected at frequent intervals as nearly as possible in a straight line between two post towns—a wire being carried from post to post, and so fixed as that it might be traversed by a tin cylinder which should carry the letters. The cylinder was to be moved by being attached to a smaller wire—an endless wire which would be wound round a drum by a man placed at each station. We have an anticipation of the convenience of two or three deliveries of letters per day in country places; of the vast in-

First edition, p. 274, 275.

crease of correspondence that would ensue, from the lessening of the cost of conveyance, both in money and time; an exposure of the clumsiness of the then existing method of conveying the mails; and a conception, remarkably expressed, of a possibility of shooting thought through long spaces by wires stretched above the road-side. "Nor is it impossible," concludes Mr. Babbage, "that the stretched wire might itself be available for a species of telegraphic communication yet more rapid." This was a near approach to the machinery, though not glancing at the principle, of the electric telegraph: and it would at that time have startled even Mr. Babbage's alert imagination to have known that in fifteen years there would be established, in the broad territories of the United States, a means of communication so rapid as even to invert the order of time, to set at defiance the terrestrial conditions of space and duration, so that, by an electric telegraph between New York and Cincinnati, news is sent of an event which, happening at noon in the one place, is known at five minutes before noon at the other.

Diving to Wrecks.
Annual Register, 1832, Chron. 108.

One use early made of the invention of waterproof cloth was for diving purposes. In 1832, some expert divers at Yarmouth, the crew of a small cutter there, discovered for themselves, and to their great amazement, that they could carry enormous weights under water, almost without being sensible of them, and perform feats of what would be strength in an atmospheric medium, which they could themselves hardly believe. The diver went down in three dresses, the uppermost one being of India-rubber cloth, with a tube inserted at the back of the neck, through which air was pumped from above to meet the consumption by his lungs. The copper helmet he wore, with its three glass windows pressed with a weight of 50 lbs. upon his shoulders; and he carried down in bags 120 lbs. of lead: yet he felt perfectly unencumbered as he walked under the green water, and leisurely surveyed the wreck which he had come to pillage. There he discovered that the large iron crowbar which he took down with him—a tough instrument enough on board the cutter—could be bent by him, on board the wreck, till its ends met. By a set of signals he obtained what he wanted from his comrades overhead; and when they sent him down baskets, he returned them full of wine.—A diver at Portsmouth was, during the same summer, exploring the wreck of the Boyne, which had sunk thirty-seven years before. He was to deliver over the copper he found to the dockyard, and to keep every thing else. One part of his treasure was wine—twenty-one bottles of port and claret, from the captain's store. As the bottles, crusted with large barnacles, came up from the deep where they had lain for thirty-seven years, persons were eager to purchase; but the owner refused twenty shillings a bottle, which was offered on deck. The Portsmouth diver wore a lighter dress than the Yarmouth crew. When his simple leather hood and Mackintosh dress were seen, men of enterprise began to think of walking round the coasts of our islands, under the waves, to measure the inequalities of the submarine hills and valleys, picking up, as they roved over hill and dale in the dim green light, the treasures of the wrecks which lie strewn there, from the days of Julius Cæsar to our own time.

The Drummond Light.

Before these adventurers descended into the depths, a philosopher had been on certain heights of our islands whence he had brought down a discovery which dazzled men's eyes, both literally and metaphorically. Lieut. Drummond has since been known and honoured in the world of politics: but when he became Lord Althorp's secretary, at the urgent desire of the whole Cabinet, he said decidedly and repeatedly that his true vocation was the pursuit of physical science in connexion with his profession, and that he should return to it after a certain term of service in political life. He did not live to return to the pursuit of science, but died worn out in devotedness to Ireland. Before accepting any political office, he was engaged in a trigonometrical survey in Ireland: and, being anxious to obtain as large a base for his triangle as possible, he pondered means of establishing signals between two distant mountain summits. This desire led him to the discovery and use of the brightest light at that time ever known—the Drummond light, as it was then called. It was obtained by directing a stream of oxygen, and another of hydrogen, under certain conditions, upon lime. The doubt was whether steadiness and permanence could be ensured. No time was lost, however, in attempting practical applications of it to purposes the most vast and the most minute. We find records of trials of new lenses with this light, by which the mariner's star, the beacon, would brighten to an ever-increasing magnitude; and of microscopic application of a light penetrating enough to show the whole interior organization of a flea, and of animalcules of the ditch, which presented themselves as transparent monsters of the deep.

POLAR DISCOVERY.
Annual Register, 1833. Chron. 151.

Captain Ross and his comrades returned from the North Pole, and landed at Hull in 1833. They had discovered the Gulf of Boothia, and the Continent and isthmus of Boothia Felix, and many islands, rivers, and lakes. They brought home also a store of valuable observations, particularly on the magnet. What remained to be discovered in connexion with the North West passage, was now brought within such compass that no one doubted that a few years would witness the completion of the survey.

ISLINGTON CATTLE MARKET.

In the last month of 1833, we find an announcement of an enterprise of a spirited individual, named Perkins, who had expended £100,000 in erecting a cattle-market at Islington, covering 22 acres of ground, and ready to receive 4,000 beasts, 40,000 sheep, and calves and pigs in proportion. The projector, and many other persons, were simple enough to believe that the nuisance of Smithfield Market would now be abated; that there would soon be an end of the danger to passengers in London streets from over-driven cattle; and of the pollution of the cattle-market in a crowded district; and of the inevitable cruelty used towards the animals in a space so crowded and inconvenient; and of the badness of the meat, in consequence of the suffering condition of the animals.—All this had been true for many years; and it had been represented again and again, and with great urgency, to Parliament: but the trustees of various trusts, the inhabitants of Smithfield, and the cattle salesmen, had always hitherto been too strong to permit a change; and they have been so to this day. It should not be forgotten, however, that as early as 1833, an opportunity was afforded for abating the nuisance of Smithfield Market.

London, ii., 322.

PETERBOROUGH CATHEDRAL.

A new choir, of great beauty, was erected in Peterborough Cathedral during this period, and the church was made once more what it was before it was devastated by the Puritans. The expense was defrayed by a subscription within the diocese, and the work was superintended by the dean, Dr. Monk, who had become Bishop of Gloucester before it was finished.

1830—34.

New London Bridge. London, i., 95.

The opening of the New London Bridge by their Majesties in August of 1831, was kept as a holiday throughout London; and the occasion was truly a great one. This was a farewell to the old bridge, with its memories of a thousand years; and here was a far surpassing work, which might carry on the mind to a thousand years more. Here it was, in its strength and grace, bestriding the flood with its five wide elliptical arches, without obstructing the stream; and here it was likely to stand, perhaps till bridges should be wanted no more. The King was in an enthusiasm; so exhilarating did he find the grandeur of the scene and the beauty of the day. He told the gentlemen of the Bridge Committee, as he stepped out of his barge, that he was most happy to see them on London Bridge; that it was certainly a most beautiful edifice, and that the spectacle was in every way the grandest and the most delightful that he ever had the pleasure to witness.—It was towards the end of 1832 that the last stone of the last arch of old London Bridge dropped into the river; and as the circles on the water were effaced, a historical scroll of many centuries seemed to be closed for ever.

Education.

London University was by this time advancing to a condition to receive its charter: and King's College, London, was in a prosperous state, as to credit, funds, students, and the number of schools in London—now seven—in connexion with it.—An university being clearly wanted in the north of England, that of Durham was projected, and its plan made known in 1831.

British Association.

In 1830 took place the first meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science; an institution of the time which, though not involving all the benefit which the sanguine expected from it at first, has yet been the occasion of too many advantages not to be noted in its origin. In a few years it became evident that while the less qualified members of the scientific world were delighted to run to these meetings, with their notions, and their self-importance, and their admiration of the eminent, many of the greatest found it inconvenient, and, from the throng of the idle and unscientific, even irksome to attend; and that a great deal of mere talk, and boast, and quackery, must be put up with; and especially that once a year was much too often for the convenience of real hard students to leave home for such meetings. But yet it was a noble thing for the wise in various departments of human knowledge to congregate and compare their discoveries and their views, and unite their efforts, and support one another's undertakings, and indicate to governments the scientific aims which it rests with the rulers of the globe to see fulfilled. At a later period it will fall in our way to note the influences and enterprises of this Association. Here it is necessary only to record that its origin is referrible to this period.

Statistics of Suicide. Annual Register, 1833, Chron. 127

A statement of suicides in Westminster was drawn up from official documents in 1833, from which some instructive results were obtained. It appeared that the number of men who destroyed themselves were nearly three to one in comparison with women; a fact which was accounted for by another of great importance—that a very large proportion of suicides was occasioned by that state of the brain induced by intoxication. Some surprise was felt at the proof that the smallest number of suicides occurred in the month of November, which had hitherto borne the opprobrium of this kind of slaughter.—A sensible check was, from this time, given to the practice of duelling by the disgust

Duelling.

excited at a fatal duel between Sir John Jeffcott, Chief Justice of Sierra Leone, and Dr. Hennis of Exeter. Sir J. Jeffcott had received his appointment and knighthood, and was on the eve of embarking for Africa, when some tattling took place at night, over brandy and water and cigars, which occasioned a challenge to Dr. Hennis. He denied the words imputed to him, but was called by his antagonist "a calumniating scoundrel," forced out to fight, in spite of strenuous efforts on the part of friends, and shot dead, at the moment before the departure of his antagonist. Sir J. Jeffcott was tried in his unavoidable absence, and acquitted, as gentlemen always are in duelling cases; but he was necessarily displaced from his judicial post. He was drowned a few months afterwards by the upsetting of a boat off the coast of Africa. The vulgar brawling character of the whole transaction, and the force put upon Dr. Hennis, sickened a multitude with the barbarous character of the ordeal of the duel who had before regarded it in the light of an older time.

Loss of the Rothsay Castle.

Another transaction between two men, who had not even the ground of friendship for their generosity, deeply touched those hearts which felt most the horror of the Exeter duel. In no crisis of human life are men put more severely to the proof than in shipwreck. The most awful shipwreck of this period, or that which was most generally impressive, was that of the Rothsay Castle, in August, 1831. The Rothsay Castle was a battered, leaky old steamer, which plied between Liverpool and Beaumaris: and at this time she had a captain who appears to have been unworthy of the command of any vessel. He started in rough weather, and silenced the remonstrances of all on board who implored him to put into a port of safety. She drifted and went to pieces in the night from the failure of the coal through her excessive leakage; and all her pleasure parties, her groups of tourists, her band of music, and her crew, were plunged into the deep at midnight. The captain denied that she was aground, when her cabins were filling with water, swore that there was no danger, hung out no lights, refused to fire a gun, though the lights of Beaumaris were visible in the distance, and was himself one of the first to perish. Only twenty-two persons were saved out of nearly a hundred and fifty who left Liverpool. Two men, strangers to each other, found themselves holding on to the same plank, which, it soon appeared, could support only one. Each desired the other to hold on—the one because his companion was old; the other, because his companion was young—and they quitted their grasp at the same moment. By extraordinary accidents both were saved, without the knowledge of either, and they met on shore in great surprise. Few greetings in the course of human life can be so sweet and moving as must have been that of these two heroes. Its contrast with that on the Exeter race-course shows like a glimpse into heaven and hell.

Annual Register, 1831. Chron 129.

Fire at the Dublin Custom House.

In the summer of 1833, a terrific fire consumed a part of the Dublin Custom House, and occasioned a vast destruction of property, though little in comparison with what might have been if, as was for some time apprehended, the quays and the shipping had been involved in the conflagration, and if much valuable merchandise had not been stored in fire-proof vaults. The sugar puncheons flared up like great torches in quick succession; the tallow sent columns of flame up into the night; while fiery floods of whisky rushed over the quay, pouring over the wall into the Liffey which presented a sheet of blue flame over half its breadth, threatening the coal-vessels that were drawn to the other side. The origin of the fire was never discovered; though large rewards were offered by government and the magistrates, from a suspicion of incendiarism. Men thought that they had now witnessed the most remarkable fire that would be seen in their generation: but they were mistaken; for in the next year, a conflagration occurred in which that of the Dublin Custom House was forgotten.

Burning of the Houses of Parliament.

In course of centuries, the power of the Commons had increased till their House had become a dignified spectacle in the eyes of the world: yet the members sat, a closely-packed assembly of business-like men, in the old St. Stephen's Chapel;—a dingy, contracted apartment, whose sides had been drawn in by wainscoting, to hide the pictures of the old Catholic times, and whose height was lessened by a floor above, and a ceiling below, the old ones. In such a Chamber as this were the British Commons found by wondering strangers till the end of the year 1834.—At that time, the tally-room of the Exchequer was wanted for the temporary accommodation of the Court of Bankruptcy: and it was necessary to get rid of an accumulation of the old Exchequer tallies;—about two cart-loads in quantity. These tallies were used for firewood; but this method of clearance was too slow; and there had once been a bonfire of them in Tothill Fields. There was some talk now of burning them in the open air; but the plan was given up, in the fear of alarming the neighbours. The burning was ordered to be done, carefully and gradually, in the stoves of the House of Lords: but the common workmen, to whom the business was entrusted, did it in rashness and hurry, nearly filling the furnaces, and creating a vast blaze, which overheated the flues. Many times in the course of that day (Thursday, October 16th) the housekeeper of the House of Lords sent to the men, to complain of the smoke and heat; but they believed in no danger. At four in the afternoon two strangers were admitted to view the House. At that time, the throne could not be seen from the bar; the visitors had to feel the tapestry, to know that it was tapestry, found the heat so stifling in one corner as to be led to examine the floor, when it appeared that the floor-cloth was "sweating" underneath, and too hot to be borne by the hand. In answer to the surprise and doubts of the strangers, the housekeeper replied that the floor was stone; and that that corner was so hot that its occupants sometimes fainted on full nights. Within two hours after the perplexed strangers were gone, with their disappointed notions of the House of Lords, the mischief broke out. Flames burst from the windows of a neighbouring apartment, and the alarm was spread all over London. The Ministers were presently on the spot, and the King's sons, and such members of both Houses as were in town. Little could be done; and of that little, much was left undone from want of concert and discipline. Mr. Hume saved a portion of the library of the House of Commons: and many hands helped to throw out of the windows, and carry away, the papers of the Law Courts. These Law Courts were saved, at the expense of their roofs being stripped off, and the interior deluged with water. The most painful apprehension was for Westminster Hall: but engines were taken into the Hall, and kept at play so abundantly as to prevent any part being caught by the flames. Many valuable things were lost; and among others, the original

Report of Lords of the Privy Council.

death-warrant of Charles the First, and the registration and qualification roll signed by members of the Commons after taking the oaths. The destruction comprehended the two Houses of Parliament, the Commons' library, the Lords' Painted Chamber, many of the committee rooms; the Clerk's house, and part of the Speaker's, with all the habitations between; the rooms of the Lord Chancellor, and other law officers; and the kitchens and eating-rooms. The comments of the crowd on such occasions show something of the spirit of the time. Mr. Hume, who was busy before all eyes, seems to have been the butt of the night, from his perseverance, for a long time past, in endeavouring to obtain a better House for the Commons to meet in. In one place some gentlemen cried "Mr. Hume's motion carried without a division:" and in another, poor men were saying that Mr. Hume could never get over this:—the fire was certainly not accidental: and every body knew how he had said he would not bear the old House any longer, he was so uncomfortable in it.—There was a shout about Lord Althorp's disrespect for the People's House when he was heard to cry out "D—n the House of Commons:—save, O! save the Hall!" which last words the French newspapers changed to "the House of Lords;" thus showing what an anti-reformer he was at heart. The Climbing Boys' Act was unacceptable to the sweeps of London; and now one of them was in high glee because the "Hact" was destroyed, and, in the joy of his heart, set up, above all the roar, the cry of "Sweep!"

There was nothing unseemly in this joking; for, really, the occasion could not possibly be considered a very melancholy one by those who were aware how seriously the public interests were injured by the unfitness of the Parliament Houses for the transaction of business, and their hurtfulness to the health of members. "Mr. Hume's motion was now carried without a division;" whereas, it would have been years, under ordinary circumstances, before any move would have been practically made towards a better housing of the legislature. The antiquarian interests concerned were not very strong;—(the relic most mourned at first, the tapestry of the Spanish Armada, was afterwards found:)—no lives were lost; no poor men were ruined; and, on the whole, the impression was that this compulsion to build new Houses of Parliament was not to be lamented.

In the morning, the King sent to offer Buckingham Palace for the use of the Legislature. Some suggested St. James's Palace: but it was determined to fit up rooms on the old sites as speedily as possible. On the whole, this was found the least expensive and most convenient plan. The House of Lords was to be made habitable for the Commons, and the Painted Chamber for the Lords, at an expense of £30,000: and not a day was lost in beginning the preparation for the next session.—It was a week or more, however, before the fire was out. It smouldered among the coals in the vaults; and the play of the engines within the boarded avenues was heard, and puffs of steam were seen to ascend, till after the Privy Council had closed their careful and protracted inquiry into the origin of the fire. This origin, as has been said, was decided to be rashness and carelessness in burning the Exchequer tallies.

Deaths.

The last memorials, in the form of living witnesses, of the strong government at the latter part of the eighteenth century, were now slipping away.

Thomas Hardy.

Thomas Hardy died in 1832, in very old age; and his comrade, John Thel-

John Thelwall.

wall, two years later. These men were made, by the passions of their time, the heroes of the liberal party of their time. They invaded the convenience and composure of authorities and men in high places by an intemperate assertion of somewhat crude views of liberty and political aims: and the authorities did something worse in invading the rights of these men, and of all other citizens in their persons, by endeavouring by a harsh construction of law and facts to convict them of high treason. The attempt was unsuccessful; and the men remained a sort of heroes, with a slight martyr-glory round their heads, as long as they lived. Their prosecution and acquittal, in company with Horne Tooke, were annually celebrated in London by a festival of the friends of civil and religious liberty, till the deaths of Hardy and Thelwall brought the observance to a natural close.—Another hero of the same period,

A. H. Rowan.

Archibald Hamilton Rowan, died in 1834, in extreme old age. He escaped the penalties of high treason only by slipping out of prison, and putting off from the Irish coast in an open boat, in which he was long tossed about before he reached Brest. The charge against him was of treasonable correspondence with the French government. He was a gentleman of education and fortune; and in his old age, when time and change had mellowed his mind, his conversation and manners were full of charm. Forty years of a useful and benign life would have been wasted and foregone, if the gallows noose had caught him in that cruel season, when extreme men of all parties hated each other with a hatred far too unphilosophical and impolitic to beseem philanthropists and statesmen.

Charles Butler.

It was a day to be remembered by the whole Roman Catholic body in our islands, when a member of the body was, for the first time after their long depression, called to the rank of King's counsel. The first who was so called was the distinguished Charles Butler, author of a whole library of books, the dread of bishops and other clergy for his religious writings, and the supporter of O'Connell in claiming his seat in parliament for Clare without re-election. Mr. Butler was in his 80th year at that time, and he lived three years longer.—

Earl Fitzwilliam.

An aged man died in the next year, 1833, who was not less beloved by the Catholics, and not less a friend to them, while himself a good Protestant;—the venerable Earl Fitzwilliam, who, in the harsh times at the close of the last century, was recalled from Ireland after a Vice-royalty of two months, on account of his countenance of the Catholic claims. On the day of his departure from Dublin, all the shops were closed, and the inhabitants appeared in mourning. He was a member of the Grenville administration for a year before its fall; and his only public connexion with politics afterwards was one as honourable to him as his Irish failure. He took part in a public meeting convened to discuss and rebuke the conduct of the Manchester yeomanry in 1819; and for this he was dismissed from the lieutenancy of the West Riding of Yorkshire. Earl Fitzwilliam died in February, 1833, in his 85th year.—

Lord Grenville.

He was soon followed—within a few months, by his old friend, Lord Grenville—another staunch champion of Catholic rights, and one who had a long course of years in which to advocate all causes that seemed to him good. Lord Grenville had been Speaker of the Commons, and found himself Secretary of State, at thirty years of age; and this appeared nothing remarkable to him—his friend William Pitt having held place and power when ten years

Earl Bathurst.

Earl Spencer.

younger still. In our days, a politician of thirty is regarded as a youth of promise. But whenever a great political genius arises, it is probable that rules and customs about age, as about every thing else, will give way.—Lord Grenville reached the age of seventy-four, and died childless, so that the barony became extinct.—Another aged Minister of State died in the same year—Earl Bathurst, who was esteemed by his party as a good man of business, and one of their soundest members.—Lord Spencer, who also died in the same year, aged 76, had not been a stable politician, having entered life as a Whig, afterwards become a supporter of Mr. Pitt, holding office at the Admiralty during the period of Nelson's victories, and going into power with Grenville and Fox, in 1806. His tastes were more literary than political, and he was the collector of the finest private library in England, the bulk of which was deposited in a suite of ground-floor rooms at Althorp, nearly 250 feet in length. The political influence of Lord Spencer's death was greater than that of his life, in his decease being the occasion of the dismissal of the Whig government, and the return of the Conservatives to power.

Lord Teignmouth.

Earl Dudley.

Sir John Leach.

Another nobleman, who died in the same year, was more fond of literature than of statesmanship; yet his name must have honourable mention among statesmen. Lord Teignmouth began life as John Shore, son of a plain country gentleman. He entered the civil service of the India Company, and rose to the office of Governor General of India. Lord Cornwallis's settlement, and other great measures of that ruler, were mainly attributable to Lord Teignmouth. Yet his heart was more in literature than in statesmanship. He was the bosom-friend of Sir William Jones, whose life he wrote, and whose works he edited. In his old age, he was the president of the Bible Society, and died in his 83rd year.—Another statesman, who cared more for philosophy and literature than politics, was lost to the world in 1833, mourned by all with compassionate grief—Earl Dudley. He was only fifty-two; and his powers had died before him; for his brain gave way, after many threatenings and much suffering from a morbid temperament, two or three years before his death. He was an intimate of Horne Tooke, the friend of Canning, and a Cabinet Minister in 1827: a man of fine tastes and accomplishments, and of independent thought. After much repugnance he had determined to support the Reform Bill, as a better alternative than withstanding the will of the nation: but when the time came, he was too ill to take his place in the legislature; and he never knew how the great question had issued.—Sir John Leach, Master of the Rolls, and a Privy Councillor, died in 1834. He began his studies as an engineer; but a discerning friend perceived in time his aptitudes for the legal profession, and induced him to follow it; and England thus obtained one of the best judges of modern times. His defence of the Duke of York, in 1809, obtained for him the good-will and confidence of the Prince Regent; and his way was then clear to the eminence which he reached. He opposed the creation of the Vice-Chancellor's Court; but yet became Vice-Chancellor after Sir Thomas Plomer, and Master of the Rolls after Sir J. Copley (now Lord Lyndhurst). His clearness of apprehension in the reception of evidence, and his decision of judgment in determining and delivering the results, were his most remarkable professional characteristics; and in private life he won respect by a singular calmness and simplicity in the endur-

Duke de Reichstadt.

ance of a long course of bodily suffering of great intensity. Most men would have died untimely under such pain as he endured; but his indomitable mind bore him up, and he reached the age of 74.—The interest of the whole political world of Europe was engaged by one death which took place at this period. The young son of Napoleon, the Duke de Reichstadt, died at Vienna in 1832, at the age of twenty-one. The birth of the little King of Rome, as he was called in his cradle, had been regarded, in the short-sightedness of men, as a mighty event; and the eyes of the world were fixed upon the child. But before he was old enough to be conscious of human destiny, his rights were gone, his father was borne away over the sea, and he became a landless German Prince, under the care of his grandfather, the Emperor of Austria. His attendants adored him for his personal qualities; and from a distance, many hopes waited upon him: but he was withdrawn from any possible struggle for thrones and dominations by early sickness and death. By the age of sixteen, he had outgrown his strength; and consumptive tendencies encroached upon him, till he sank thus in early manhood. As he lay in state in the palace, those who passed by the bier received the most affecting lesson of the time as to the deceitfulness of worldly hopes.

Sir John Leslie.

In science, one of the most interesting names of the times is that of Sir John Leslie, born of an humble farmer and miller in Fifeshire, who died Professor of Natural Philosophy in the University of Edinburgh. He was a sickly child, averse to books and lessons, but always delighting himself in calculations, and following out mathematical inquiries. This peculiarity fixed the attention of the parochial minister, and was the occasion of his being sent to St. Andrew's, to study for the church. He and Ivory went to Edinburgh together, neither of them probably anticipating the eminence to which both were to raise themselves. Leslie was aware that the church was not his true destination; and he declined it, becoming tutor to a nephew of Adam Smith's, and to two of the Randolphs of Virginia, with whom he went to the United States. On his return, he intended to lecture on Natural Philosophy, but found, to use his own words, that "rational lectures would not succeed." A disgraceful controversy took place between the magistrates and clergy of Edinburgh respecting his nomination to the Mathematical Chair in their University, in 1805, the clergy objecting to him on the ground of his having irreligiously declared Hume's Theory of Causation "a model of clear and accurate reasoning." The magistrates appointed Leslie, in disregard of the clerical opposition; and the clergy brought the affair before the General Assembly. After a discussion of two days, the Assembly decided not to subordinate science and liberty of opinion to dogma propounded on an occasion of mere inference, and dismissed the appeal of the clerical objectors as "vexatious." Mr. Leslie filled that chair till he was called to succeed Playfair, in the Professorship of Natural Philosophy, which he held till his death, in November, 1832. He invented or revived the Differential Thermometer, and aided science in many ways by a vigorous exercise of his bold inventive and conjectural faculty, which was more remarkable in him, mathematician as he was, than his powers of reasoning and research. His pupils complained of a want of simplicity in his style, and of clearness in his arrangement; while more advanced students believed that the difficulty lay also in his over-rating the powers and experience of those to whom he addressed himself. The highest order of his hearers were continually charmed with the life and vigour of his views, and the rich illustration he cast over his scientific subjects from the stores of his general reading. His experimental processes were exquisite from their ingenuity and refinements. His last production is to be found prefixed to the 7th edition of the Encyclopædia Britannica—a Discourse on the History of Mathematical and Physical Science during the 18th century. He died in his 67th year.

Wm. Morgan.

In the next year, died a mathematician who put his science to a practical use which all could understand. William Morgan, who was for fifty-six years actuary to the Equitable Assurance Society, was a nephew of Dr. Price; and it was Dr. Price who withdrew him from the medical profession to which he was destined, and caused him to be fitted to the function in which he did so much for the practical application of the science of Probabilities, and for the elucidation of National Finance. He published much that was useful; but it was as a standing authority, always ready for reference, that he rendered his most important services; and all the while, the Equitable Office was rising, under his management, from being a small society, with a capital of a few thousands, into an institution of national importance.

David Thompson.

The hurricane at the Mauritius, in 1834, killed a man whose name is destined to live in connexion with nautical science, Captain David Thompson, whose computation and production of the Lunar and Horary Tables, and invention of the Longitude Scale, were emphatically acknowledged by the Board of Longitude. He did much to fence in with safety the broad highway of nations; and thus, his services so lie on the verge between science and the arts as to lead us to consider him as a comrade of the great man who opened so many roads to us on the firm land, and whose engineering achievements come under the head of the Arts.—Thomas Telford was President of the Society of Civil Engineers at the time of his death, which happened in the autumn of 1834, when he was 77 years of age. Telford was a poet in his youth; and surely we may say that he was a poet in action in after life; for where are lofty ideas and a stimulus to the imagination to be found, if not in such spectacles as the Menai Bridge, and the Caledonian Canal, and his great Welsh Aqueduct, and St. Katherine's Docks, and the water communication that he made through the pine-hills of Sweden, from the North Sea to the Baltic? It was thus that he regarded his works, and in this spirit that he wrought them; for he had the loftiness of mind, the bright integrity, and benign candour, which are the characteristics of genius that has found its element. There is hardly a county in England, Wales, or Scotland, which is not strewn with monuments of him, in the best form of monument—beneficent works. There is no day of any year in which thousands are not the better for the labours of this man.—Two years before his own death, Telford had been called to mourn that of a pupil and a friend whom he had introduced into a career which promised success something like his own. Alexander Nimmo was, when very young, recommended by Telford to the Parliamentary Commissioners for fixing the boundaries of the Scottish counties; and again to the Commissioners for reclaiming the Irish bogs. All round the coast of Ireland his works are found—harbours, docks, piers, and fishing stations: and

Thomas Telford.

Alexander Nimmo.

1830—34. his Chart of the whole coast is held to be a guide of great value. He died at Dublin, in 1832, aged 49.

R. H. Gower.

Henry Bell.

Lionel Lukin.

During the same period we lost Richard Hall Gower, the author of various improvements in naval architecture, which were gradually, though slowly, brought into practice before his death in 1833:—and Henry Bell, who, so early as the 2nd of August, 1812, launched the first steam-vessel, called the Comet, on the Clyde:—and the aged Lionel Lukin, who was the inventor of the safety-boat. The Norway yawl, on which he first experimented, was bought by him, with his earnings in his coach-building business, in 1784; and his patent bears date the next year. Though his boat was established for the time by the approbation of Sir Sydney Smith, who found that it could be neither overset nor sunk, the invention of safety boats was afterwards claimed by other parties, and Mr. Lukin was deprived of much of the honour and emolument which were his due. He contributed in other ways to the public safety and convenience, as by his raft for the rescue of persons carried under the ice; by a bedstead for invalids, and several improvements in the construction of carriages. He was 92 when he died, in 1834.—Some now living remember the introduction of the Camellia Japonica into this country. We owe the luxury to Archibald Thomson, a kinsman of the poet of the Seasons, and chief gardener at the Marquess of Bute's estate in Bedfordshire. The superb Magnolia Thomsonia was raised from seed by Archibald Thomson; and he saw the plant reach a height of eighteen feet, and a circumference of twenty-four. Like most of the hardy and well-employed race of Scotch gardeners, he attained a great age, dying in his 81st year, in 1832.—The eccentric Abernethy died in 1831, after having made himself so talked about for his oddities as hardly to have justice done him for his important services. He raised the reputation of English surgery all over Europe by indicating and performing an operation, in certain cases of aneurism, which was before supposed impracticable: and, by its connexion with him, St. Bartholomew's Hospital rose to be the first in London. Mr. Abernethy did not at all approve our following, in any degree, the ancient Egyptian practice of parting off the human body among dozens of classes of doctors—so that one was to have charge of the limbs, and another of the lungs, and another of the stomach, and others of the eye, the ear, the mouth, and so on. Mr. Abernethy did not like to hear of oculists and aurists, but insisted upon it that no man was fit to undertake the charge of any member without being fit for the charge of the whole, as no function of the frame is isolated. In this, the sense of society went with him, the only wonder being that, since the days of the old Egyptians, there should have been any doubt about it. Mr. Abernethy did not know where he was born, but only that his parents removed to London in his early infancy. He was 66 years old when he died.

Archibald Thomson.

John Abernethy

Peter Heywood. Purcell.

Among the rovers of their time, we find two names of great interest in the list of the deaths of the period. Two midshipmen, it will be remembered, remained with the mutineers of the Bounty, in 1788, when the other officers were set adrift in an open boat on the Pacific. One of these midshipmen, Peter Heywood, died in 1831, and Mr. Purcell, who was one of those in the open boat, followed in 1834. Peter Heywood was only fifteen at the time of the mutiny: and before he was much older, he led a party of sixteen of the mutineers to settle in Otaheite, in order to meet the vessel which it was certain would be sent after them from England. The Bounty was given up to Christian and his eight comrades, who had no wish to stir from where they were, or to meet any English vessel. When the Pandora arrived in Otaheite, the two youths rowed out to her, and made themselves known, when they were put in irons, and treated with extreme rigour. After a most disastrous voyage home, young Heywood met his trial—showed that his case was one for pity rather than punishment—was found guilty, but freely pardoned by the King. He afterwards became an able and trusted officer. One of his last services was with Lord Exmouth in the Mediterranean, in 1815 and 1816: and Lord Exmouth died soon after him—in February, 1833. As Lord Exmouth lay on his painful death-bed, we may hope it cheered him to think of the Christian captives whom he had released from their Algerine slavery. He reached his 76th year.—Captain Sir Murray Maxwell, who commanded the unfortunate Alceste at the time of her loss, died in 1831. He passed, with spirit, fortitude, and in the finest temper, as dreary a period as can well occur in any man's life—the fortnight which elapsed between Lord Amherst and his forty-six companions leaving the Captain and crew on their desert island, and the arrival of the cruiser from Batavia which relieved them. During this fortnight, the little party of British seamen were besieged by Malay pirates, in fifty or sixty boats, who burned the Alceste to the water's edge, and allowed her crew no rest from self-defence, while they had no alternative before them but starvation. Captain Maxwell's command, under these circumstances, and the discipline of his crew, have obtained a world-wide fame, as they truly deserve.—One other rover, Richard Lander, in whose discoveries the nation took an unwonted interest, was cut off untimely, by an attack of the pirates of the Niger, in 1834. Lander had attended Captain Clapperton into the interior of Africa, and had witnessed and reported the discoveries made in Clapperton's final expedition: and he had afterwards, when accompanied by his brother, solved the great problem of the termination of the Niger, by following it down from Boussa to the sea. His ears had drunk in the sound of the surf upon the beach, and his eyes had seen the sea-line, dressed all in the more than tropical light of triumph, and of solemn achievement: and this wonderful happiness—as much as is yielded by the whole life of some men—was to be enough for him; for in three years afterwards he was dead, at the age of 30. He had bought an island off Attah, and meant to establish a trading station there: but the piratical natives attacked him at a disadvantageous moment, and shot him in the hip, and he died of the wound.

Lord Exmouth.

Sir Murray Maxwell.

Richard Lander.

In the department of Art there were great losses during this period. In 1831 died Mrs. Siddons, in her 76th year. There are few living now who remember her in the fulness of her power; but there are few who have not witnessed the enthusiasm of their fathers and grand-parents at the mention of her name, and who are not aware that the enthusiasm was justified as much by the purity of her character as by the glory of the genius which derived its exaltation from that purity. A yet more ancient favourite, the favourite of George III., Quick, the actor, died in the same year, aged 83:—and also the monarchical Elliston—and in a few months after, the comic Munden—and in 1833, Edmund Kean, the last of the stars of the first magnitude. Kean was

Mrs. Siddons.

Quick.
Elliston.
Munden.
Kean.

a study as interesting to the mental philosopher as to the playgoer, so extraordinary was his possession of his "single gift." It would appear beforehand that to be such an actor as Kean must require a large variety, as well as a high degree, of intellectual ability; yet he never manifested any power of mind at all above the average—hardly indeed up to the average—any where but on the stage. His mode of life was not such as to husband his powers; and he died at the age of 45, worn out by excess and exhaustion of body and mind. His first appearance was at four years of age, riding the elephant in Bluebeard, when his beauty, and especially the grandeur of his eyes, fixed the attention of some who afterwards saw him at the summit of his fame. His last appearance was in March, 1833, in the character of Othello, when his performance, begun languidly, was broken off in the third act by the utter failure of his strength; and in the ensuing May, he was carried to his grave.—

Retirement of Mr. Young.

Dramatic Committee.

The prospects of the stage were further darkened by Mr. Young having retired in the preceding year, during which an attempt was made to retrieve the failing fortunes of the drama by the appointment of a Parliamentary Committee on Dramatic Representations, for the purpose of ascertaining what changes could be made in the licensing laws, which could relax the monopoly of the two great theatres, and afford a better opening for authors, actors, and the play-going public. Amidst all the reasons alleged for the decline of the drama—such as the late dinners of the aristocracy, the absence of royal patronage, and the spreading objection of certain religious bodies to dramatic representations—it was clear that the main cause of that decline was the decay of the public taste for this kind of amusement, without which the other causes alleged would not have been operative. The Committee, however, recommended a large invasion of the existing monopoly of the two great theatres, for their own sake, as well as justice to others; a revision of the system of fees to the censor of plays; and an extension of the same protection to dramatic authors as was enjoyed by authors in other departments of literature. The rising passion for the Italian Opera afforded, at the same time, a hint to parties concerned to try whether the popular taste for the spoken drama was or was not merging into that for the musical drama: and the New English Opera House was opened in the summer of 1834.

New English Opera House.

Muzio Clementi.
George Aspull.

Two eminent pianists died during 1832—one at the end of a very long career—the other at the beginning of one which promised great marvels—Clementi, who reached his 81st year, and George Aspull, who died in his 19th.—

Augustus Pugin.

Augustus Pugin, a Frenchman, spent the forty last years of his life among us, and revived in England the study of Ecclesiastical architecture, which has since spread and flourished under the favouring influences of the Tractarian party in the Church. He died in 1832, in his 64th year.—

James Christie.

In the department of Vertù, we lost Christie, who, being intended for the Church, became an auctioneer; but such an auctioneer as was never dreamed of before. He raised his business to the rank of a profession, and lived in a world of artistical and philosophical ideas which the poet might covet. He explored the nature of the Greek game invented by Palamedes before the siege of Troy, and believed that he had traced it down, through old ages and countries, to our own firesides, where it bears the name of Chess. He wrought among the old idolatries and their symbols, till he penetrated into some curious secrets of art.

He was the first authority in the kingdom in pictures, sculptures, and vertù. He made the world understand the value of Mr. Hope's collection of vases: and these friends, after having solaced themselves with the delights of art and antiquarianism, left the world together. Mr. Christie died on the 2nd, and Mr. Hope on the 3rd of February, 1831.

Thomas Hope.

—Mr. Hope's name is distinguished on so many grounds that it is rather difficult to assign his place among our benefactors. From our insular position, and our being kept at home by the long war, and also from our English habit of ridiculing what we do not understand, we were at first guilty of treating Mr. Hope with contempt when he endeavoured to improve our taste in decorative art: and an article in the Edinburgh Review, on his folio volume on "Household Furniture and Decorations," stands as a monument of our shame. But Mr. Hope triumphed; and we have gained, among other things, a lesson in modesty. It was he who first sustained Thorwaldsen, and brought the young Chantrey to light, and stimulated the mature genius of Flaxman. His town and country houses were a paradise of delights to lovers of antiquities and art. He is perhaps most generally known as the author of "Anastasius," a romance in which the author gives evidence of (among other things) the thoughtful spirit in which he went through his early travels in the east.

John Thomas Smith.

—To another hunter after antiquities we find ourselves more deeply indebted now than any one was aware of during his life; for John Thomas Smith, keeper of the prints and drawings at the British Museum, died the year before the burning of the Houses of Parliament. Mr. Smith had published in the closing years of the last century, "Antiquities of London;" and when, in 1800, the accession of Members on account of the Irish Union compelled the enlargement of the House of Commons, and the wainscoting of St. Stephen's Chapel was taken down, revealing the old paintings that were behind, Mr. Smith determined on following up his former work with the "Antiquities of Westminster." He made haste, as the workmen were always at his heels; and in the August mornings he was at work as soon as there was light enough, and painted diligently till the workmen arrived at nine o'clock, when he sometimes saw them destroy the very paintings he had just been copying. He made memoranda, matched the tints carefully, and took all pains to perfect his work—both with regard to the paintings which were disappearing, and others which it was supposed might last for centuries. Many of the prints, coloured and gilt by his wife and himself, were lost by a fire at the printing-office where they lay; and the loss was severe: but the place given him at the British Museum provided comfortably for his latter days. He is remembered chiefly as the preserver of the antiquities of Westminster: but this was not one of the seven great things by which he used to tell that his life had been distinguished. He delighted to say "I received a kiss when a boy from the beautiful Mrs. Robinson—was patted on the head by Dr. Johnson—have frequently held Sir Joshua Reynolds's spectacles—partook of a pot of porter with an elephant—saved Lady Hamilton from falling, when the melancholy news arrived of Lord Nelson's death—three times conversed with George III.—and was shut up in a room with Mr. Kean's lion." It seems a pity that he did not live a few months longer, to see the flames swallowing up the Houses of Parliament, and exult in the thought of what he had saved from their ravages.

George Cooke.

—Cooke, the engraver, who presented

1830—34.

such a world of scenery to stayers at home, died in 1834, from brain fever, at the age of 53—and a few weeks after him the aged Thomas Stothard, who began life as the apprentice of a pattern designer for brocaded silks. Brocaded silks went out of fashion; and Stothard had, as the fruits of his apprenticeship, his nicety of eye and hand, and elegance of taste in designing small embellishments; and he used them in illustrating, with exquisite little designs, Bell's British Poets, and the Novelists' Magazine. These caught Flaxman's eye, and brought him that good man's friendship. He passed easily from such small works as these to painting figures seven feet high, on the staircase at Burghley House. His latest designs are seen among the illustrations of Rogers's poems, bearing date 1833—some months before his death.—Peter Nasmyth, called "the English Hobbima," died in middle life, in 1831, with the love of his art so strong upon him, that when he was dying, and a thunderstorm was sweeping by, he asked his sisters to draw aside the curtain, and lift him up, that he might watch the effects of the stormy lights.—And then went the young Liverseedge, just when his fame was rapidly rising, and before he had reached his 30th year. He lived in the world of Shakspere, Cervantes, and Scott; and it was his picture of Adam Woodcock that was kindling his fame when the cold hand of death was laid on his life.—Jackson, the portrait-painter—not so strong as Raeburn, nor so graceful as Lawrence, but with a clear style of his own, distinguished by its fine colouring—died in 1831:—and in 1833 we lost, by a sad accident, Robson, whose landscapes were amongst the most eagerly looked for at the Water-Colour Exhibition every year. The cause of his death was the bursting of a blood-vessel in sea-sickness. His life was happy from that devotedness in the study of Nature which is not subject to the disappointment to which most human pursuits are liable. His eagerness about his first earnings was that they might carry him into the Scotch Highlands, where, with his plaid about his shoulders, and the "Lay of the Last Minstrel" in his pocket, and the dusky fells and rolling mists before his eyes, he was happy to his heart's content. The spirit of those early-seen Scotch mountains is in his pictures to the last. The frequenters of the Water-Colour Exhibition must have been struck by the frequent appearance of Durham and its cathedral. It was because Durham was Robson's native city. He took care that its fine aspect should be nearly as familiar to others as to himself, though they had not, as he had, feasted their eyes upon it from four years old, and crept to the shoulder of every wandering artist who sat down to sketch any where in the environs. One of Robson's last pictures was judged to be one of his best—London from the Bridge, before sunrise.

Thomas Stothard.

Peter Nasmyth.

Henry Liverseedge.

John Jackson.

George F. Robson.

There are, in the province of literature and learning, some names of the departed during this period which we would not let pass without some grateful mention; and there are others which excite a deeper emotion.—Among the humbler benefactors in this department was Priscilla Wakefield, whose books for children were usually found in a thumbed and tattered condition on nursery shelves—intensely moral as they were, and fine in the phraseology of their dialogue. In those days, when there were scarcely any children's books in existence, her efforts were as welcome as they were praiseworthy. Mrs. Wakefield died, very aged, in September, 1832.—An excellent man was removed in the same year, before he was forty, who had given his life to such

Priscilla Wakefield.

Richard Evans.

good works that it is sad that his years were not doubled. Richard Evans, himself a scholar, and the conservator of the ancient Welsh MSS. of the Cambrian Society, took to heart the ignorance of the poor Welsh in London who were not at home in the English tongue. Mr. Evans collected and superintended a little colony of Welsh families—about twenty—in the neighbourhood of one of his warehouses. He instituted weekly lectures on Mechanics in Welsh, for all of that people in London who chose to attend; and he spent much money and time in diffusing the means of knowledge among them.—

Alexander Murray.

One of the most curiously learned men of the time was the Professor of Oriental languages in Edinburgh University, Dr. Alexander Murray, who was born of poor parents in the depths of Galloway, and died in 1834, at the head of his own department of learning in Great Britain. His early progress in Latin and Greek, acquired in some mysterious manner before he even went to school, secured his further education. While an Edinburgh student, some one was wanted to arrange the papers of Bruce the traveller. Young Murray in a trice learned half a dozen eastern languages, to qualify him for the business, which he did well. After he was settled in his manse, something happened which disturbed the great and the wise in high places:—a communication came from the Court of Abyssinia, which nobody could read. Again Murray was wanted; and this time he was ready. He had now only to step into his chair at the University, where the authorities were glad enough to have him: for such oriental scholars are not always to be had when they are wanted.—

William Hazlitt.

In Hazlitt we lost the prince of critics, at this time; and after he was gone, there were many who could never look at a picture, or see a tragedy, or ponder a point of morals, or take a survey of any public character, without a melancholy sense of loss in Hazlitt's absence and silence. There can scarcely be a stronger gratification of the critical faculties than in reading Hazlitt's Essays. He was born in 1778, and died of cholera in 1830. He was not an amiable and happy, but he was a strong and courageous-minded man. His constitutional irritability was too restless to be soothed by the influences of literature and art, and his friends suffered from his temper almost as much as himself. Yet he was regarded with respect for his ingenuous courage in saying what was true about many important things and persons of his time, of whom it was fitting that the truth should be told. Hazlitt would have passed his life as an artist, but that he could not satisfy his own critical taste, and had no patience with any position but the first in any department in which he worked. The greater part of his life therefore was spent in a province of literature in which he was supreme in his own day, if not alone. As an essayist he had rivals: as a Critical essayist, he had none.—Two popular dramatists, O'Keefe and Prince Hoare, died in 1833 and 1834.

John O'Keefe.

The name of O'Keefe carries us back some way into the last century, his popular farce, Tony Lumpkin, having been acted at the Haymarket Theatre in 1778. After writing fifty dramatic pieces, he subsided into the quiet befitting his blindness and old age, and lived till his 86th year.—

Prince Hoare.

Prince Hoare was very aged too—80 when he died. In 1788 his comic opera, "No Song no Supper," won him his first fame. In more advanced life, he became secretary to the Royal Academy, and, from his scholarship in Art and literature he was a member of several societies. He was esteemed and beloved for the most engaging moral qualities; and his

William Roscoe.

parting act was a beneficent one: he bequeathed his library to the Royal Society of Literature.—The venerable William Roscoe, of Liverpool, died in 1831;—venerable for the benignity of his character and the purity of his tastes, and especially for the gentle steadiness with which, through long seasons of trial, he upheld the cause of the negro against the slave-holding spirit of Liverpool in his day. On this matter, he never, with all his love of peace and social good-will, gave way for a moment. It is for this, rather than his literary acts, that Mr. Roscoe is and will be remembered. His principal work was the "Life of Lorenzo de' Medici," which obtained great reputation at once, from the character of the times, which, impeding research of the kind required, rendered such works scarce and extremely superficial. Mr. Roscoe reached his 81st year.

Sir James Mackintosh.

Some of the most affectionate and solemn associations relating to this period are called up by the name of Mackintosh. Sir James Mackintosh died, unexpectedly, in 1832, at the age of 67; and the word "untimely" was applied to his death, through a sort of general expectation that a man of such powers would yet do something which would make his great name live after him. In early life, when he published his "Vindiciæ Gallicæ," his name had been in every mouth: and in his latest years, the House of Commons listened, heart and soul, whenever he spoke. But he was not destined to effect much during his life, or to make a monument for himself. He had stores of knowledge, remarkable powers of subtle thought, and an unsurpassed facility of expression; but a fatal indolence, which extended to the interaction of his faculties, scattered his resources, and vitiated much of the work which he actually did. His "Dissertation, containing a General View of the Progress of Ethical Philosophy," (prefixed to the Encyclopædia Britannica,) is the work on which his reputation is commonly supposed to rest: but it is a more frail support than the memories of those who knew him, and than the records of his speeches in parliament. It will not bear the test of advancing science, any more than the kindred writings of Dugald Stewart. In parliament, his heart and voice were always on the side of justice and humanity, as justice and humanity appeared to him. In print and in private, though there might be much that was superficial and unsound in his views, as well as subtle and profound, the spirit of earnestness and reverence was never absent. He held the office of Recorder of Bombay for some years; and was in parliament for several sessions; and had a way to any eminence opened to him by the pioneering influence of general expectation: yet he died amidst a celebrity which had still more of anticipation than of acknowledgment in it. His life had been a swaying between contemplation and action; and, though he might by this have obtained some enlargement for his own mind, the indecision was fatal to his leaving any substantial memorial of himself in either region. He enjoyed the friendship and homage of most of the leading men of his time; and there was no one living who did not share his placid good-will. His integrity in political life was in accordance with the simple unworldliness of his mind.

Henry Mackenzie.

Henry Mackenzie, who wrote "The Man of Feeling," died at the age of 85, in 1831. A mistake of his own affords as good an eulogium as his worshippers could desire. From the unbounded success of his beautiful story, "The Man of Feeling," he was induced to offer a companion novel, "The Man of the World," which shows, unmistakeably, the unsophisticated character of the author, and his inability to understand the ways and thoughts of worldly men. Those who were amazed at the badness of the second tale should have felt rebuked for their disappointment by the beauty of the first.—Anna Maria Porter, the novelist, died in 1832, just three months before him whose marvellous works had swallowed up the fame of all contemporary writers of fiction. While Scott was yet but a boy, however—while he was lying on the heathery hill-side, nourishing and playing with his powers of conception and narration—Miss Porter's novels—"Thaddeus of Warsaw," the "Recluse of Norway," and others—were giving great pleasure, and preparing the multitude of lovers of fiction for the treat to come.—Of Scott, it is impossible, as it is needless, to speak at length in this place. Every trait of his life is in all memories; every character of his long-drawn pageant is vivid before all eyes. Any attempt to estimate his share in modifying the mind of his time would be in vain: and if it were not, the materials for an estimate lie equally open to all. Every one can inquire of himself what the writings of Scott have been to himself and to those whom he knows best: and from that recognition, let him form his estimate.—As for the man himself, every one knows all that can be told, and sees that he was not so happy or so wise as such a genius as his should have made him: that he did not honour his genius, and repose upon it as it would have been bliss to do; but looked down to lower objects, and so, was deprived of his repose by that very genius, avenging itself. In a mood of respectful compassion, the nation had seen him sinking under toil to which a common-place ambition had subjected him, and which it would have been cruelty to him to compel him to forego. For some time before his death, his mind had sunk utterly; and at last, the day of repose for the feeble body came—brightly and mildly. It was in the noon of one of those autumn days which are so sweet in Scotland, when the window was open, and the ripple of the Tweed over the stones was heard by those who were around the death-bed, that the eyes closed and the breathing ceased. The life which had gone out had been crowded with toils: the world was full of these rich gifts, and the national heart was sad at the thought that there could be no more. The gifts remain, however, a boon for each coming generation as it rises; and thus the fame of Scott may well be committed to the general charge.—There was a sad sweep among his connexions afterwards. Within half a year, his confidant, partner, friend, and printer, James Ballantyne, without whose co-operation the whole of his enterprise must have borne a different character, died in middle age. And in the next June, the daughter Ann, who had tended Scott in his long decline, drooped and sank. And since that time, all his other children have died—in these few years—and no descendants but two grandchildren are left to inherit the glory for which he cared so little, and the estate for which he sacrificed so much. Such are the caprices of the human mind and the human lot!

Anna Maria Porter.

Sir Walter Scott.

Of Poets, we lost, during this period, some of great note. The elegant, scholarly Sotheby was not one to be popular; but he gave much pleasure to his own circle of admirers: and his life was happy in a serene course of literary exertion. He made many elegant translations, and wrote tragedies, masques,

William Sotheby.

and epics, none of them containing elements of grandeur; but all of them full of purity and grace. He lived to 76, and died at the close of 1833.—

George Crabbe.

The venerable George Crabbe died, in old age, in 1832, leaving behind him memories which any one might covet. It is one of Burke's titles to honour that he saved this pure genius from extinction under the pressure of poverty, from no lower impulse than a generous humanity. Crabbe was starving, when he made a simple and straight appeal to the great man, and was met in the spirit in which brother should meet brother in our perplexed human life. From that hour, all went well with Crabbe; and his long life was passed in virtuous clerical duty, in domestic peace, and in giving a charming utterance to his experience of the heart, and his observation of the various human lot. His poems are full of minute details, ennobled by a genial spirit, and made touching by the pathos of truth and love. His poems, besides finding their way at once to a million of hearts and homes, remain a quiet but living picture of English life in his time, which may probably kindle the heart of a remote antiquarianism in ages when English life, always the same in spirit, may have changed most of its forms.—

S. T. Coleridge.

S. T. Coleridge may perhaps be best placed among the Poets, rather than the philosophers, of his time, because the finest characteristics of his philosophy give an immortal substance to his poetry, while they leave his philosophy without base or permanent substance. A genius so lofty and so various has rarely distinguished man: but the absence of one essential element brought it down to a lower level than that of a crowd of otherwise inferior minds. With an imagination which soared above the stars, a subtlety which would have enabled him to hold his place in a council in Pandemonium, a power of abstraction which should have strengthened him to put the sensuous world beneath his feet, and an eloquence which might have enslaved the human race, he had no power of will—of that virtuous will without which every man—be he who he may—is himself a slave. In Coleridge, it was a constitutional defect, early marked, and fatal to his life. It was a constitutional deficiency, to be allowed for as such; but it must not be disguised that it rendered him incapable of Duty—of fidelity in friendship, in citizenship, and in domestic life. And it vitiated his philosophy by eating out of it its reality and substantive truth. Thus, his theology was any thing but the gospel—the religion which men prize because it is equally the treasure of the lowly and the exalted in intellect: it was an airy fabric of the argumentative faculties and the imagination, and baseless sentiment, and not a deep concern of the understanding and the heart. And thus it was with his philosophy; for true philosophy absolutely requires a broad foundation of science, and the vital element which can be supplied only from the affections. This said, which in conscience must be said, the rest remains wonderful—even awful in its wonder. And the consolation of the case lies in the virtue which the power and the deficiency together called out in other men. The forbearance, the tenderness, the reverence, with which Coleridge was regarded, in the face of his vitiated life, are more than a compensation for what was wanting in himself. From the days when awe-struck schoolmates gathered round "the inspired boy" in the cloisters at Christ's Hospital, to the present moment, when his worshippers turn away from a sound of censure, as from a desecration of his grave, he has met with that magnanimous justice which it requires some of the loftiest qualifications to command: and in this influence lay one of the chief benefits of his life. Others were the sublime faculty by which he opened to us new worlds of thought, and made the oldest new; the subtlety of analysis by which he displayed the inner workings of what was before our eyes, before closed and impenetrable; the instinct by which he discerned relations among things which before were isolated; and the thrilling sense of beauty which he awakened by bringing all the appearances of nature into illustration of ideas before wholly abstract. Thus, his discourses on the laws and facts of thought, his dramatic criticisms, and his own poems, are full of lights and charms which hardly need the magic of his utterance to make them intoxicate the young thinker, and stimulate the faculties of the more mature. He was the wonder of his time. If he had not been subject to one great deficiency, he would have been its miracle. As it is, his fame is not likely to grow—less because his magical voice is silenced, than because his enchantment itself must be broken up by the touch of science. Even then, glorious will be the fragments that will remain. They will be truly the traces of old idolatries—not of one, but of many; for he spent his life in the worship of a succession of idols—those idols being Ideas, which he called Opinions, and which he was for ever changing. S. T. Coleridge was born in a Devonshire vicarage, in 1772; and he died at Highgate, on the 25th of July, 1834.

Dr. Andrew Bell.

A man of great benevolence, who indirectly contributed much to the great work of National Education, which yet remains, for the most part, to be achieved, ought to be mentioned at the close of this period. Dr. Bell, a prebendary of Westminster, was once a chaplain in India, and there conceived the idea of extending the benefits of education by setting pupils to instruct each other. He reported his method; and it was soon adopted in England to such an extent, that he saw 10,000 schools established, attended by 600,000 children. He believed that the object of general education was gained; and so did many others. It required some years to show that nothing like education can be obtained by the ignorant teaching the ignorant. The results have been such as to disabuse the most sanguine. But public attention was turned to the instruction of the childhood and youth of the nation: and, in this sense, we may be said to be still benefitting by the introduction of the Bell and Lancaster system. Dr. Bell employed his large fortune in acts of beneficence, devoting 50,000*l.* to the establishment of a college in his native city of St. Andrew's. He died in January, 1831.

Having now recorded the acts, and buried the treasures, of an important period of our history, we must proceed to learn what further blessings have been brought home to our country and people by the life-giving hand of Peace.

END OF BOOK IV.

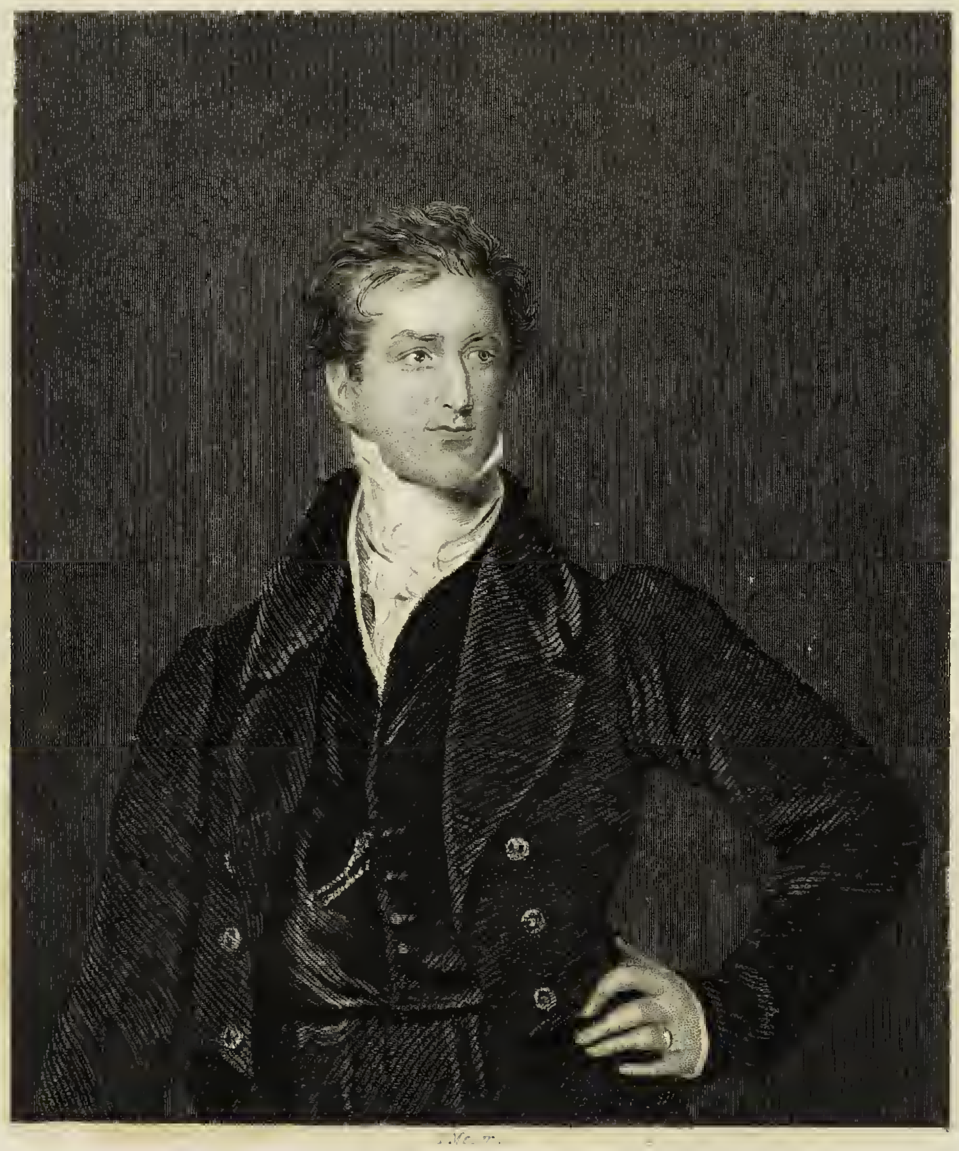
BOOK V.

CHAPTER I.

1834. December.

THE THREE PARTIES.

FROM the time of the passage of the Reform Bill, the three parties in the State—kindred with those which exist in every free State—began to accept one another's new titles, and the professions included in those titles. The Tories, Whigs, and Radicals wished to be called Conservatives, Reformers, and Radical Reformers; and the easy civility of calling people by the name they like best spread through public manners till the word Tory was seldom heard except among old-fashioned people, or in the heat of political argument. The Whig title has since revived—inevitably—from the Whigs having ceased even to pretend to the character of Reformers: and the Radical Reformers were not numerous or powerful enough in Parliament to establish for themselves a title which should become traditional. There was some dispute, and a good deal of recrimination, at the outset about the assumption by each party of its own title; the Tories declaring that they were as reforming, in intention and in fact, as the Whigs, only in a preservative way; the Whigs declaring that the only true conservatism was through reforms like theirs; and the Radicals, who were called Destructives by both the others, declaring that a renovation of old institutions—a regeneration on occasion—was the only way to avoid that ultimate revolution which the Tories would invite and the Whigs permit. While the titles were changing, the parties were as yet essentially the same as ever:—as usual, they consisted mainly of the representatives of those who had much to lose, those who had much to gain, and the umpire party, disliked by both, whose function is to interpose in times of crisis, and whose fate it is to exhaust the credit acquired in such seasons during long intervals of indolence and vacillation. Such was, as usual, the constitution of the three political parties, after the passage of the Reform Bill, and when the changes in their titles actually took place: but there were clear-sighted men at that time who perceived that the change of names was but the first sign of an approaching disintegration of the parties themselves; a disintegration which must be succeeded by more or less fusion; that fusion being introductory to a new exhibition of products. The old parties—notwithstanding their new names—were about to disappear. They could not be annihilated; but they would re-appear so transmuted that none but the philosopher would know them again—with new members, a new language, a new task, and a whole set of new aims. As much of this prevision has come true as time has yet allowed for.



SIR ROBERT PEEL.

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The disintegration and fusion have taken place; and all thoughtful people see that a new formation of parties must be at hand. One limit of the transition period of parties remains still future: the other must be laid down at the date of Sir Robert Peel's accession to power, in December, 1834. Here we have the old Eldon oracle speaking again—speaking "in the spirit of fear," and not "in that of power, and of love, and of a sound mind," and therefore giving out its truth in a dismal disguise; but still giving out more truth than any body could use at the time.—Here we have Lord Eldon's party view of the future, while the Wellingtons and Rodens, and Knatchbulls and Lyndhursts, and Wharncliffes and Ellenboroughs, were in power, at the opening of the year 1835. "The new Ministers certainly have the credit, if that be creditable, of being inclined to get as much popularity by what are called reforms as their predecessors; and if they do not, at present, go to the full length to which the others were going, they will at least make so many important changes in Church and State, that nobody can guess how far the precedents they establish may lead to changes of a very formidable kind hereafter." Though Lord Eldon could see no other reason for Tories making changes than a hankering after popularity, we can discern in the facts and his statement of them the beginning of that wasting away of parties which he did not live to see.

Life of Lord Eldon, iii. 244.

The Duke's Offices.

The new Conservative rule began with a joke. Some, who could not take the joke easily, were very angry; but most people laughed: and among them, the person most nearly concerned—the Duke of Wellington—laughed as cheerfully as any body. Sir Robert Peel was at Rome; it must be a fortnight before he could arrive: and nothing could be done about the distribution of office in his absence: so the Duke took the business of the empire upon himself during the interval. This he called not deserting his sovereign; and he was as well satisfied with himself in this singular way of getting over the crisis, as on all the other occasions when he refused to desert his sovereign. His devotion was such that for the interval he undertook eight offices—five principal, and three subordinate. "The Irish hold it impossible," wrote a contemporary, "for a man to be in two places at once, 'like a bird.' The Duke has proved this no joke—he is in five places at once. At last, then, we have an united government. The Cabinet Council sits in the Duke's head, and the Ministers are all of one mind." The angry among the Liberals treated the spectacle as they would have done if the Duke had proposed to carry on the government permanently in this manner. Condemnations passed at public meetings were forwarded to him with emphatic assurances that the condemnation was unanimous: an orator here and there drew out in array all the consequences that could ever arise from the temporary shift being made a precedent; and Lord Campbell condescended to talk, at a public meeting at Edinburgh, of impeaching the multifarious Minister. At all this, and at a myriad of jokes, the Duke laughed, while he worked like a clerk from day to day, till the welcome sound of Sir Robert Peel's carriage-wheels was heard.

England's Seven Administrations, iii. 141.

Position of Sir Robert Peel.

It is a strong proof of the virulence of the party-spirit of the time, that even generous-minded men, experienced in the vicissitudes of politics, could not at first—nor till after the lapse of months or years—appreciate the position of Sir Robert Peel. Every body saw it at last; and there were many who, during that hard probation, watched him and sympathized with him with daily in-

1834. creasing interest and admiration: but there were too many who turned his difficulties against him, and who were insensible till too late to the rebuke involved in the fine temper which became nobler, and the brilliant statesmanship which became more masterly, as difficulties which he had not voluntarily encountered pressed upon him with a daily accumulating force. His being at Rome proved how little he had anticipated being called to office. He had no option about accepting it—his sovereign sent for him, and he must come: and when he arrived, he found there was no possibility of declining a task which he believed to be hopeless. Unpopular as the Whig Ministry had become, the Conservatives were not the better for it, but the worse; for the cry for reform was growing stronger every day: and he could have no hope of gratifying the majority of his own party, as he could not attempt to repeal the Reform Bill, or to get back to the old ways. There was nothing before him but failure, with discredit, on every hand: but, while he would certainly never have chosen to fill a position so hard and so hopeless, he had a spirit whose nature it was to rise under difficulties, and to feel the greatest alacrity under desperate conditions.

One of the desperate conditions was, that he could not form the Cabinet which his intentions and the necessities of the times required. He arrived in London early on Tuesday, December 9th, and went at once to the King: yet on the next Saturday nothing was known but that he would himself be Chancellor of the Exchequer, as well as First Lord of the Treasury. Lord Stanley and Sir James Graham had declined being of his corps; and he did not accept the Ultra-Tory adherents of the Duke whom he found hanging about on his return. In his Ministry are found, naturally, but unfortunately for its chances, four men whose political steadiness could never again be counted upon—Lords Lyndhurst and Rosslyn, Sir James Scarlett, now made Lord Abinger, and Mr. Alexander Baring, afterwards Lord Ashburton. The rest were of such politics as to discredit at once all professions of the Duke and his friends, in Sir R. Peel's absence, of the desire of the government to promote all rational reforms. The Duke himself went to the Foreign Office: Mr. Goulburn to the Home—Mr. Herries to the War—and Lord Aberdeen to the Colonial Office. Sir Henry Hardinge was Irish Secretary—Lord Wharncliffe, Lord Privy Seal—and Lord Rosslyn, President of the Council. Lord Lyndhurst was on the woolsack, and Lord Abinger became Chief Baron. Some of the King's sons-in-law, who were Whigs, resigned their offices in the Household, and were succeeded by Conservatives of a very pure water.

New Cabinet.

Another of the desperate conditions was the state of parties in the Commons. From the moment there was a rumour of a difficulty between the King and Lord Melbourne, the Whigs and Radicals in the House began to incline towards each other, lest the reformers of England should lose any of the ground they had so hardly gained. From the moment it became known that Lord Melbourne had declined the earldom and the Garter, which the poor King had the bad taste to offer as a compensation for unreasonable treatment, all differences were sunk for the season, and the two parties united as one; so that it was believed on every hand that little more than a fourth—certainly less than a third—of the existing House of Commons, would support the new Ministry. Though the people might not, at that juncture, return a much more favourable House, the experiment must be tried. Parliament was prorogued on the 18th of December; and on the 30th it was dissolved by proclamation, and a new one was convoked, to meet on the 19th of February.

DISSOLUTION OF PARLIAMENT.
Annual Register, 1834, p. 337.

Before taking the sense of the country, it was necessary for the Minister to put forth some declaration of what the country had to expect from him: and this he did in the form of an address to his Tamworth constituents, avowing that he was at the same time addressing the whole middle classes of the nation. It is observable that while he speaks undoubtingly of his obligation to take office, and heartily of his intention to toil and persevere, there is scarcely an expression in the address which indicates hope of permanence and success. Its tone is cheerful, but no one could call it sanguine; and, in indicating the principles on which he means to act, he speaks for himself alone, and makes no reference to a Cabinet policy, or to administrative co-operation in any way, merely declaring, in a parenthetical manner, that the sentiments of his colleagues are in entire concurrence with his own.

TAMWORTH MANIFESTO.

First, he declares himself a reformer of abuses, and points to his own great measures in regard to the Currency, to Criminal Law, to Jury trial, and other matters, in proof of his disposition to remove abuses and facilitate improvements. In the same spirit, he would accept and make operative any reform actually accomplished, whether he originally approved of it or not: and he would therefore accept the Reform Bill, considering it "a final and irrevocable settlement of a great constitutional question:" and he would carry out its intentions, supposing those to imply a careful review of old institutions, undertaken in a friendly spirit, and with a purpose of improvement. Coming down to particulars, he would not interfere with the Inquiry of the Corporation Commissioners, of which he had shown his approbation by being voluntarily a member of the parliamentary Committee upon it. He had voted with government on Lord Althorp's Church-rate measure, and was still willing to relieve the Dissenters from the grievance of paying church-rates, and of a celebration of marriage in terms to which they conscientiously objected. He would not admit the right of Dissenters to admission to the universities; but he would recommend an alteration of the regulations which prevented any of the King's subjects from being on a perfect equality with others in respect to any civil privilege.—He would not countenance any retrospective inquiry into the pension list—filled, as it had been, under circumstances that had passed away; but he would advocate more care in future in the conferring of pensions. About Church Reform in Ireland again, his mind was not changed:—he was in favour of the best distribution, be it ever so new, of ecclesiastical property for ecclesiastical purposes; but he could not sanction its application to any other than strictly ecclesiastical objects. He wished to see a commutation of tithe in England; and with regard to deeper matters—the laws which govern the Church—he desired time for further thought, and opportunity for new light. The somewhat deprecatory tone of the conclusion of this Address is striking now, and must have been strongly felt by all the many classes of readers who thronged to get a sight of it on the morning of its appearance. "I enter upon the arduous duties assigned to me with the deepest sense of the responsibility they involve, with great distrust of my own qualifications for their adequate discharge, but at the same time with a resolu-

1834. tion to persevere, which nothing could inspire but the strong impulse of public duty, the consciousness of upright motives, and the firm belief that the people of this country will so far maintain the prerogative of the King as to give to the Ministers of his choice, not an implicit confidence, but a fair trial."

Such was the text on which the popular comment of the elections was to proceed. It was much more liberal than the Liberals had expected: but when they looked at the group of colleagues behind, they distrusted the Minister and his Manifesto, and set vigorously to work to elect a House which should bring all his counsels to nought, and frustrate all his efforts. He could not have said that they, as Liberals, were wrong; and neither he nor they could anticipate how their opposition would rouse his faculties and exalt his fame.—This address appeared in one paper as a mere advertisement, in small type. In another, it was conspicuous as the leading article. It was immediately reprinted, throughout the country; and it is strange now to see it standing under the heading of "the Tory Manifesto." If this was its true title, Toryism had indeed changed its character, much and rapidly.

1835. The first reformed parliament had not satisfied its constituents; it had done some wrong things, and omitted many right ones; but it had had the great virtue of being in advance of the ill-compacted, desultory, unbusiness-like Whig Cabinet. It would have done more and better but for the drag of the Administration, which was always put on when there was up-hill work to be attempted. If the same parliament had been allowed to remain, its great reform party no longer impeded by the Whigs, but aided by them, great things might be hoped. As it was not to remain, it was parted with more respectfully and good-humouredly than could have been supposed possible three months before, under a prevailing sense that much allowance must be made for the disadvantage of the Reform Ministry having so soon fallen so far below all rational expectation. Every thing might be hoped from the next House of Commons. The first object of every class of reformers was clear enough—to depose the Conservatives, and reinstate a reforming Ministry: and it would be perfectly easy to do this by union between the Whig and Radical parties, though, as every one knew, there would be more Conservatives returned under a Peel, than under a Grey Ministry. More Conservatives were returned; but the reformers had still an overwhelming majority; and from the hour when the members assembled, it was only a question of time—a consideration of sense and temper—when and how Sir Robert Peel should be compelled to retire. The popular power being thus clearly able to do what it would, it now appears strange that the virulence of the time was what it was. The Minister seems to have been almost the only man who preserved temper and cheerfulness, though his position was incomparably the hardest—placed, as he was, in that hopeless position without any choice of his own. It is not necessary to record the ill-humour of the time by anecdotes which would now convey more disgrace than the parties deserved: but it may be said that the kingdom was covered with altercation, from the House of Lords, where the late Ministers spoke with extreme bitterness of late events, down to the street corners and police courts, where fretful men complained of each other, and of the police, and the bill-stickers, and all officers concerned in all elections. The Conservatives quar-

The New Parliament.

Temper of the Time.

1835. relled among themselves quite as virulently as either party with the other. The old Tories put out a caricature of the search of Diogenes, who lights upon Lord Eldon as the only honest man. The *Times* lectured the party on its slowness and apathy; and other Conservative papers denounced all compromise with reform, now that the opportunity was present of putting down the Papists and the Radicals by the powers of government, under the countenance of the King. As soon as it was clear that the Reformers had a very large majority, and when the *Times* retreated so far as to discuss the possibility of a coalition between the Grey and Peel parties, the other leading paper, the *Standard*, intimated that the new parliament would be immediately dissolved, in order to afford the people an opportunity of reconsidering their duty, and returning a House more agreeable to the other ruling powers. This intimation caused such an outcry about a return of the time of the Stuarts, that the paper softened its menace immediately: but it could not recall the hint it had given to the constituencies to keep up their organization, in readiness for a new election, at any hour. Accusations of bribery all round were profuse, and, on the whole, too well deserved; for the occasion was indeed a most critical one, when the corrupt, as well as the honourable, felt called on to put forth all their resources. Then, there was incessant quarrelling about the Waverers, or doubtful men, who were just sufficient to make it difficult to calculate, and easy to dispute, what the Conservative minority would in reality be. Then, again, it was certain that, from the losses to the Reform party in the English boroughs where corporation reform was most wanted, the two parties were run so close that any effectual parliamentary majority must be yielded by Scotland and Ireland; and this gave occasion for a fierce renewed cry about Papist supremacy. When the last election returns came in, it appeared to the most careful calculators that the Reformers were secure of a majority of above 130; and, if all the doubtfuls were given to the ministerial party, the Conservatives would still be in a minority of 82. Thus the fate of the new Ministry was decided, and known to be so, before the Premier met parliament;—known at least by the Liberals, though the Premier himself appears to have gained confidence as time went on, from finding how much reform it was practicable for him to effect. At a dinner at Tamworth, he intimated that the ominous predictions of his being unable to carry on the government might not, perhaps, be necessarily true: parliament might give him a fair trial: and he could not but think that many who were classed as Reformers held views very like his own.

The Reformers, however, felt that this was no time for a comparison of views on any particular subjects; but rather an occasion for deciding between opposite principles of government in the large. In this there can now be no question that they were right: and, the more the late Whig government had fallen short of fidelity to Reform principles, the more important it was now to reassert them, and to put aside any Minister, be his personal merits what they might, and his policy ever so promising, who stood forth as the representative of the Tory party, with a group of Tories at his back. "Public principle"—however the words might be ridiculed by the newspapers of the day, as meaning private interests and jealous tempers—did require that the distinction of parties should at that crisis be made as conspicuous as possible; and if anger,

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and disappointment and jealousy among ministerial men on the Whig side did make sad havoc with temper and manners, such incidents did not alter the duty of the time. Those Reformers who were much of Sir Robert Peel's mind about many things, and might have supported him in a tranquil organic season, were now bound to set him aside if they could, because the first duty of the critical period was to choose decidedly between an unregenerate and a regenerate system of government. There was not therefore, necessarily, any spirit of faction in the determination of the Reformers to begin the campaign by requiring a Speaker of their own party. Whether or not they had been right hitherto in maintaining Sir Charles Manners Sutton in the Chair, it was clear that it would not be right now. Times were altered; and the man was visibly altered by the change in the times. He had been unable—as every body else was unable—to resist the temptation to active partisanship; and he was so far less qualified for the Chair than formerly, even if no "great public principle" had become involved in the question of his reappointment.

Election of the Speaker.

Mr. Abercromby was the man on whom the wishes of the Reformers settled; but Mr. Abercromby objected to the nomination, and he resisted the honour till nearly the last hour. He yielded, however; and immediately left town, while it was universally known that on the other side even urgent personal canvassing was practised. This difference, and the inclination of many quiet or lukewarm Reformers to have a Speaker of such proved qualifications as Sir C. Manners Sutton in so troubled a session as was before them, rendered it doubtful, to the last moment, which way the election would turn. There was an extremely full House on the critical 19th of February: only a few of the Doubtfuls and six Tories were absent: almost all the rest of the Waverers and thirty-five Reformers voted for the Ministerial Speaker; and yet Mr. Abercromby was chosen by a majority of ten. The Reformers from this time knew that the session was theirs, if they were active and united. Sir Charles Manners Sutton at once received the peerage which his long services truly merited, being called to the Upper House by the title of Viscount Canterbury.

Mr. Abercromby chosen.

Spectator, 1835, p. 169.

On the 24th, the King came down to open Parliament in person. His Speech declared the rising prosperity of manufactures and commerce, but deplored the depression of agriculture, and recommended to parliament the consideration of reducing the burdens upon land. Wearisome as it is to record and to read of the depression of agriculture, almost from year to year, it becomes the more necessary to do so as we approach the period when a free trade in corn was demanded by a majority of the people. It is necessary to see, as we proceed, what the state of things was which the opponents of change would have perpetuated—what the good old times were which they were unwilling to abandon. This year, the farmers' cry came up so piteously that it was echoed in the King's Speech; and it was left for the multitude below to wonder how it was that there were any farmers in England—so losing a business as farming evidently was. Another series or two of farmers had to be impoverished yet, before the withering system of protection was put an end to: but every complaint to government, and every mention by the sovereign, of agricultural distress now went to remind the thoughtful that there must be something radically wrong in the existing system, whatever might be the

King's Speech. Hansard, xxvi. 63.

difficulty of agreeing about a better.—The King also requested the attention 1835. of parliament to the Tithe questions in Ireland and England; to Ecclesiastical Reform, in regard to discipline and the administration of justice; to the best way of relieving Dissenters from a form of the celebration of Marriage to which they conscientiously objected; to the Municipal Corporation question; to the operations of the Ecclesiastical Commission; and to the condition of the Church of Scotland.

The conflict of parties began at once, in the House of Lords, about the Address. According to Lord Eldon's report, there was a serious dread, some days before, of a large majority against Ministers, even in the Upper House; Angry Debates. and the Conservatives made a solemn call upon each other to muster strongly, for the last chance of preserving their dignities and their property, lest their children, like those of the French nobility, should be doomed to become Commoners. The feeble old man was himself in his place, almost for the last time. "I sat," he says, "last night in the House of Lords till between twelve Life of Lord Eldon, iii. p. 243. and one—till all in that House was over. I certainly would much rather have sat by my fireside, quietly, and enjoying the comforts of conversation." But he was resolved, as long as he lived, to do his part in saving the monarchy. The debate was deformed by much anger and mutual unfairness. In both Houses the recrimination was unworthy of so great an occasion, the late Ministry unreasonably finding fault with the dissolution of parliament, and with the Duke of Wellington's way of conducting the business of the State during the Premier's return from Rome; and the Conservatives unwisely dwelling on an anecdote of the time which has never ceased to be vividly remembered. It had actually happened that before the King could have sent to the Duke of Wellington, and before Lord Melbourne could have officially communicated to his colleagues the state of the King's mind, an ostentatious statement appeared in a morning paper—a statement which must have been derived from a Cabinet Minister, and which was universally attributed to Lord Brougham—that Lord Melbourne's administration was dismissed, and that "the Queen had done it all." Though the Speech made no allusion to the change of Ministry, and Lord Melbourne's proposed Amendment was also silent about it, the anecdotage of the crisis formed the chief part of the debates on the Address in both Houses. The Amendments insisted on carrying out the principles of Reform in regard to the projects contemplated by the late parliament, and lamented its unnecessary dissolution before those reforms were completed. In the Lords' House, the Amendment was simply negatived. In the Commons it was carried by a majority of seven. Hansard, xxvi. 151, 410. And here, at the outset, the Premier had to consider what was to be done. He took time to Hansard, xxvi. 425. consider, in order, as he frankly avowed, to guard himself against any misleading from mortification, and to ascertain whether the vote conveyed the real sense of the House. When satisfied that it did so, he did not oppose the amendment of the Address; and it was carried up to the King, therefore, with the unusual feature conspicuous in it of the discontent of the Commons with the late dissolution of their House. The King was sorry, of course, that the Commons did not concur with him in regard to that act, and declared that he Annual Register, 1835, 101. exercised his prerogatives with the sole view of promoting the welfare of his people.

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The restlessness of the Opposition was increased by the two majorities they had already obtained; and, through one opening or another, inquiries were incessantly conveyed to the Minister whether he meant to resign. His answer was that the two votes did not convey a declaration of want of confidence in the government, and he therefore thought it his duty to proceed. These inquiries naturally caused rumours out of doors; and then again, these rumours were reproduced in the House, to elicit further explanations from Ministers. On the 2nd of March, Lord John Russell made a statement of two reports which were prevalent—that Parliament was again to be dissolved, on the first ministerial reverse; and that if this should happen before the Mutiny Act could be discussed, the army was to be kept up, on the responsibility of the administration, without the assent of Parliament. That such a project should have been imputed to one political leader by another, in our day, is a remarkable indication of the disturbance of the general mind. Lord John Russell declared that he should avoid putting the direct question whether these things were true; but that he intended to test the disposition of the Cabinet by bringing forward, at a time of which he gave notice, the Appropriation question, and that of Municipal Reform. The Premier's reply was clear and frank. He had never discussed or proposed any where a speedy dissolution of Parliament; but it was not his business to place in abeyance, by any declaration of his, the royal prerogative of dissolving Parliament: and this, as he observed, was a fuller reply than Lord Grey had given to the well-remembered question of Lord Wharncliffe on the same subject. As to the Irish Church question, he and his colleagues were anxious that the Commission should prosecute their labours, as yet only half finished; and when they had furnished the requisite information, government and the country would see what ought to be done—the present government adhering to its principle that the property of the Church ought to be applied only to strictly ecclesiastical purposes, but being ready to amend the distribution of that property, when the requisite evidence should be complete. There was no objection on the part of the government to any needful reform of Corporation abuses; but neither they, nor any body else, could declare what such reforms should be till the Commissioners should have offered their Report. As for the rumour about the maintenance of the army without the sanction of Parliament, he had never heard the subject mentioned till that night. The same kind of suspicious inquiry was made of Lord Aberdeen in the Upper House about the carrying out of the Emancipation Act in the West Indies, when the Colonial Secretary declared that no one could be more anxious than himself—whose first vote had been against slavery—that the Act should be completely carried out; and he had written to Lord Sligo to entreat him to remain in his office of Governor of Jamaica, and complete his work, without any misgiving on account of the change of administration at home.

Hansard, xxvi. 471.

Hansard, xxvi. 474—478.

Hansard, xxvi. 419.

Debate on the Malt Tax.

On the next great subject of discussion, men of all parties united on either side. Lord Chandos proposed, to the embarrassment of the government which he usually supported, the repeal of the Malt Duty—the promise of which boon to the farmers was believed to have greatly influenced the elections. Many Whig and Radical members agreed with the Premier that such a proposition could not be entertained before the financial condition of the country was known: that there was no reason to suppose that the surplus in the Treasury could meet such a demand: that it was not the barley-growers whose distress now called for attention, as the price of barley had been rising for a considerable period: and that it was extremely doubtful whether the farmers would be peculiarly benefited by the repeal of the duty. On the division, Mr. Grote and Mr. Hume were found voting on opposite sides; and three members of the late government spoke in support of Sir Robert Peel against the motion of his own adherent; the strife of party was visible only in the sarcasms thrown out in the course of debate; and the majority against the repeal of the Malt tax was 158. Hansard, xxvi. 834.

On the next occasion of defeat, the Administration had little sympathy from any quarter. They had made an indefensible appointment to an office of high importance; and they had to take the consequences; and the Premier among others, not only because his was the first responsibility in such cases—however his opinion might be overruled in private—but because he attempted a lamentable defence in Parliament of an appointment which could in no view be justified. Early in January, the following paragraph appeared in the *Times* newspaper: "We notice, merely to discountenance, an absurd report, that Lord Londonderry has been, or is to be, named Ambassador to St. Petersburg. The rumour is a sorry joke." It was no joke. If all England had been searched for a man whose politics were most like those of the Emperor of Russia, Lord Londonderry might well have been chosen: and he was now to be sent to represent the mind of England to the Emperor of Russia—now, when the affairs of Turkey were in a state to require the most accurate representation of the opinion of Great Britain—now, when Poland was commanding the sympathies of the whole world, but when Lord Londonderry was in the habit of speaking decisively of the Poles as "the rebellious subjects of the Emperor of Russia;" and when he professed himself a sympathizer with Don Carlos and Don Miguel. His Lordship's notions about a fair personal interest in public service were also too well known throughout the country to dispose the people of England to place him again in their service. It could never be forgotten that he had, a few years before, brought disgrace upon himself by declaring, in the House of Lords, that he had been calumniated and injured by the Foreign Office, and challenging Lord Dudley, then Foreign Secretary, to produce a certain correspondence which would explain the case. In the course of explanation it appeared that Lord Londonderry had been importunate for a pension, in consideration of his diplomatic services; and that the calm and moderate Lord Liverpool had written in pencil on the back of the letter, "This is too bad." These things, before well known, were now repeated in Parliament, and the portrait of the rank Tory nobleman, with his rashness, his obtuseness, his narrowness, his ingenuous conclusions that the people and their purses were created for the benefit of the aristocracy, was held up before the public eye in a way infinitely damaging to the Administration. Sir Robert Peel held up, on the other side, his manliness and his military qualifications—qualities which, with some other very good ones, nobody denied, but which did not constitute him a fitting representative of the mind of the British nation at the Court of Russia. The appointment was not actually made out: but Sir R. Peel declared himself ready to maintain the nomination. The difficulty,

Lord Londonderry's Appointment.

Hansard, xxvi. 943.

1835. however, was ended by Lord Londonderry immediately withdrawing. The debate in the Commons was published on Saturday; and on Monday, the Marquess declared, with his characteristic manliness, that he saw it to be impossible that he could act with advantage at a Foreign Court while disowned as a representative by any considerable portion of the political body at home; and therefore, while scorning all scoffs and imputations, and heedless of invidious censure, he should, for the sake of his sovereign, decline the service proposed. The Whig Lords were anxious to explain that their disapprobation was grounded on the speeches he had made in that House, which had manifested his dismay and anger at the expulsion of the Bourbons, his rancour against the Poles, and his sympathies with Don Miguel and Don Carlos; which state of opinion seemed to qualify him rather for the post of Russian ambassador in England than British ambassador in Russia. The Ministers were as severely judged by their own party on this occasion as by any other. They had humbled the King, and rendered his prerogative ineffective. If it had before been true that the sovereign could not practically carry out any such appointment without the approbation of Parliament, express or implied, the truth had not been exhibited; and decent appointments had made all easy. In this case, the King had been first misled and then humbled; and the Conservatives had little more mercy on the Ministers than any body else.

Hansard, xxvi. 1005.

Dissenters' Marriages.

In the preceding year, Lord John Russell had brought forward a measure for the relief of Dissenters in regard to the marriage ceremony. It was well meant; but the Dissenters could not possibly accept it. All proposed legislation on this subject, thus far, had been kind in its spirit, and earnest in the desire to give relief; but it had unconsciously carried an air of condescension—a supposition of respective superiority and inferiority not admissible in affairs of conscience. No one could be further than Lord John Russell from sympathizing in the sayings of the Eldons and the Wynfords, and others, who could not conceive of a Dissenter as a man whose rights were as precious, and whose conscience was to be as much considered, as their own. Nobody could be further than Lord John Russell from the insolence of asking what harm it could do a Dissenter to be blessed in a form of words offensive to his religious feelings, as long as he was not required himself to repeat those words. Lord John Russell was disposed to relieve the Dissenter from the pain and humiliation of being a party to a religious service which he conscientiously disapproved; and he proposed to open their own chapels freely to the body for the performance of the ceremony of marriage. But he did not see, till the rejection of his measure by the Dissenters pointed out the fact to him, that it was an infringement of religious liberty to render the Dissenters dependent on the Church for the publication of their banns, and the declaration of that procedure by the clergyman. He did not see that it was an encroachment on liberty of conscience to permit marriages to be celebrated only in places of worship, thus perpetuating the modern innovation, injurious to many consciences, of absolutely connecting the civil contract with the religious celebration. On these grounds, and also because they objected to the necessity of affixing the license in some conspicuous part of their chapels, the Dissenters had rejected Lord John Russell's measure of the session of 1834. Many whose occasions have not led them to a very close study of the application of the principles of re-

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ligious liberty, called them, as usual, captious. Others, who, like Lord Holland, knew the Nonconformists, and recognised their function in the state, received their petitions and statements with respect, and considered them with deference. "Take care," said Lord Holland to a brother peer, a few years later, on another question of Dissenters' rights—"take care how you conclude against the Nonconformists on any question of religious liberty. I have seen more of them than most men; and I never differed from them without finding myself in the wrong." In such a temper of honest respect did Sir Robert Peel now look into this case of Dissenters' marriages. He went down to the principle of the matter at once, in which he was as well supported by the lawyers in the House as by the Dissenters out of it. On the principle that the civil contract is the first consideration before the law; and that, even in churches where marriage is regarded as a sacrament, the religious ceremony only arises out of the civil contract, the Minister now proposed to establish at once the broad principle of the validity of marriage by purely civil contract. He also offered full liberty to all denominations of Dissenters to marry in their own chapels. It was honourable to the House of Commons that it received this broad measure as it deserved, recognising the truth of its principle. So did the Dissenters also receive it; but, amidst their satisfaction and gratitude, they did not forget their fidelity to their function. They pointed out that even this Bill would not establish equality before the law for men of differing faiths: —it still provided one method of marriage for Churchmen and another for Dissenters, and they required liberty of marriage by civil contract to be extended to the whole of society. They also objected, on their own account, to being dependent on the clergy for the registration of their marriages. Lord Eldon's remark on this is, "The Dissenters are pleased, but they seem not to disguise that they are not satisfied. I take it that the true friends of the Church are neither pleased nor satisfied. As to the Dissenters, it is their nature not to be satisfied, as I can judge from very long experience." These haughty gentlemen, who regarded the Nonconformists as a separate breed, and talked of "their nature," seem never to have asked themselves whether they would themselves ever be "satisfied" to be compelled to marry nowhere but in a Roman Catholic Church, or to depend on the Catholic priesthood for the celebration and registration of their marriages. The Minister received the representation of the Dissenters with respect and good-will, and saw the force of the objection about the registration by the clergy; or, in case of the civil contract celebration, by a magistrate who was usually a clergyman. He had it in his mind to bring forward a registration measure of large scope; but he could not do every thing at once, and at present could only announce it. On going out of office, shortly after, he committed the whole business to Lord John Russell, by whom that ultimate measure was brought forward the next year which has happily settled the Marriage question. This ultimate measure was brought in together with one for a Registration of Births, Marriages, and Deaths: by it, the civil contract becomes all that the State has to do with the celebration of marriage; and it is accomplished through the Registration Office, while all persons are left free to conduct the religious celebration of marriage according to their own views.

Political Dictionary, ii. 319.

Life of Lord Eldon, iii. p. 244.

During this extraordinary session, the Minister seemed to be inexhaustible

1835. —in purposes, in resources, in energy, and, it may be added, in temper. By this time, his political antagonists had begun to admire; and the country was awake. Success and permanence in office were evidently out of the question still; but all that man could do the Minister did to lessen the rancour of parties by uniting them in good objects. His speech upon the malt tax had manifested great care, knowledge, and industrious research; and now his introduction of a measure for the Commutation of Tithes impressed his hearers yet more with a sense of these qualities. He hoped to induce a pretty general commutation of tithes, by offering facilities and inducements to such a settlement. His antagonists believed that none but a compulsory commutation would take full effect: and many pronounced any settlement at all of that question an achievement not to be expected of any statesman whatever. This was no occasion of party strife, while it evidently improved the Minister's position. He had caused the re-appointment of all the Committees of the preceding session which had for their object the investigation into needs and abuses; and it was clear to all by this time that he had no intention of meddling with any questions on which the mind of Parliament had been declared, and its legislation settled. With regard to other matters, as well as Education in Ireland, and the incipient plan for England and Wales, he declared his principle to be to acquiesce in what had been deliberately decided on, and to endeavour faithfully to carry out the purposes of the legislature.

Ecclesiastical Commission.

One of the first acts of the Ministry had been to issue a Commission to inquire into the evils which had arisen from the old ecclesiastical arrangements, now outgrown, about the territorial divisions, income, and patronage, of the Church. Already the Commission were in waiting with their Report, which was presented on the 19th of March. A new arrangement of dioceses was proposed, and the erection of two new bishoprics—those of Manchester and Ripon; while, on the other hand, the sees of Bangor and St. Asaph might be united; and also those of Llandaff and Bristol. An equalization of great Church incomes, and a fairer distribution of work and salaries, were also proposed.—About the same time, the Attorney General gave notice of a Bill to amend the discipline of the Church of England: and he also renewed a measure for the improvement of the administration of Ecclesiastical Law which had been originated under the Duke of Wellington's former Ministry, and adopted by the Whigs in their act of issuing a Commission. There was much disputation as to which party ought to enjoy the credit of these proceedings; for it was not yet clear to all who were in high places that a time was come when, by a law of necessity, men must make a common stock of statesmanship—must unite their wisdom for the general good—and be satisfied with the honour and blessing of having originated, or of having carried through, good measures, with all procurable assistance from every quarter, without insisting on that glory of a more ancient statesmanship, in which the people had little or no part—of being responsible for the whole conception, preparation, and execution, of a new act of policy. Our successive Ministers and their parties were, for a series of years, incessantly complaining of each other for taking up and carrying good measures which they did not originate: but what would they deserve as Ministers if they avoided taking up and carrying good measures because they did not originate them? Ours are not times when men can say, "That is my bit of truth, and you shall not have it"—"That is my bit of usefulness, and you shall not touch it." The truth and the usefulness become, under a faithful representative system, as free as the light and the air. The real glory is in effectually dispensing them—a work in which every political benefactor we have is more or less concerned with some predecessor:—and if, in the midst of such work, any man's heart is really set upon his due of praise for his precise share in the suggestion and management, it might be easy to ascertain that precise share. The difficulty would be to make any body care to know what it was.—Amidst the prevalence of the charges all round of borrowing or stealing political measures, the people are quietly drawing their inferences—surely distinguishing the make-shift politician who catches at a popular cry, takes up in a slovenly way what is suggested to him, and offers it without improvement or adaptation, from the true statesman, who, amidst many mistakes of his opponents, sees here and there a good embryo measure, reflects upon and expands it, collects all needful knowledge about it, imbues it with originality and life, clothes it with a proper organization, and produces it in his day of power, acknowledging whence he derived it, but secretly conscious that but for him it would never have been thus matured. Such has been the process, so repeatedly and so conspicuously of late years, on our platform of government, that men in high places have begun to understand it like the crowd below—and we hear less complaint with every change of government, of a borrowing or stealing of the thoughts of rivals: but, during the short Peel administration of 1835, such complaints were abundant, and very bitter.

MINISTERIAL DEFEATS.

This short administration was now approaching its close. On the 24th of March, the Minister was outvoted about the functions of a Committee to inquire into a charge of intimidation at the late Chatham election, by an officer in command there.—On the 26th, another defeat was sustained on the question of the London University Charter. The grounds of proceeding about this Charter had been examined by the Privy Council; and, during the period of Whig government, nothing had been done about it; while Oxford and Cambridge had petitioned against any permission to the London Universty to grant degrees of the same denominations as those of the ancient Universities; not objecting, as they declared, to the grant of a Charter, or the power of conferring academical honours, but desiring to keep appropriate to themselves the titles of honour which should prove that those who bore them belonged to the Established Church, and had graduated at Oxford or Cambridge. The motion on the present occasion was for an address to the King, beseeching him to grant such a Charter to the London University as was approved by the Law Officers of the Crown in 1831, and containing no other restriction than against conferring degrees in divinity and in medicine. The proposers declared, on being questioned, that the reason why they brought forward this motion now was that they had no longer the hope which existed in the days of a liberal government, of the admission of Dissenters to the old Universities: and if such admission could not be obtained, they must seek for justice in the social career by acquiring such privileges as could be had for the one University which was open to them. The government amendment was one which did no credit to any body concerned in it, and was, perhaps, the

Hansard, xxvii. 212.

LONDON UNIVERSITY CHARTER.

Hansard, xxvii. 283.

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Hansard, xxvii. 279.

most damaging act of Sir Robert Peel's short term of office. It was of an obstructive character which could not be mistaken—addressing the King for copies of the memorials presented against the project of a Charter, together with an account of the proceedings before the Privy Council. This was practically a reverting to the old wrong of considering the Dissenters an inferior and disgraced body, and excluding them from any fair chance in professional life: and the wrong was too flagrant for the times, strong as was the spirit of bigotry, and the habit of prejudice among the classes from which the legislature is selected. The time was come when either the old Universities must throw their gates wide to Dissenters, or they must abstain from interference with that honourable and conscientious body—withheld by honour and conscience from winning University privileges—in obtaining justice by another mode. The government was left in a minority of 136 to 246. The King's reply to the Address was gracious; but for several months after the return of the Whigs to power, nothing more was heard of the matter. By the next August, the pressure of the government by the Council had become such as to procure a proposal which was at once accepted by all the parties concerned in the University—that a body of men of science and scholarship should be incorporated by Charter in London, for the purpose of examining candidates and conferring degrees in Arts, Medicine, and Laws, on not only students educated in the one college in question, but in others in London, now specified, and also some in the country to be afterwards recognised. This satisfied all reasonable persons. The Dissenters desired justice, and not a monopoly; and the proposed extension conferred dignity, while securing enlarged usefulness. On the 28th of November, 1836, two Charters were granted—one to constitute the University of London, hitherto so called, "University College, London," for "the general advancement of literature and science, by affording to young men adequate opportunities of obtaining literary and scientific education at a moderate expense,"—the other Charter creating the "University of London." The proceeding, however, bore the ordinary character of the executive acts of the Whigs—it was imperfect, if not illegal, the instrument bearing the words, without qualification, "during Royal Will and Pleasure." These words doomed the Charter to expire within six months after the death of William IV. Queen Victoria, as advised, revoked it, and granted a new one on a better tenure, which received the great seal on the 27th of December, 1837. In this Charter the object is declared to be to hold out the encouragements of the institution "without any distinction whatsoever;" a declaration so clear as deeply to discredit an attempt made in the next year to introduce, in the form of optional discipline, a test which should establish "distinctions" on account of differing modes of faith. It was Dr. Arnold who tried the unhappy experiment; and he failed, as the best-intentioned man must do who attempts to force his personal convictions on a public institution, in opposition to its leading principle, and the express terms of its Charter. The University remains equal in its operations to all, on the broad ground of the equal rights of all, without fear or favour, to liberty of opinion.

Hansard, xxvii. 301.

Penny Cyclopædia, xxvi. 25.

Life of Arnold, ii. 11–121.

Conflicts in Parliament.

To return to the last nights of the Peel administration.—There was a recurrence of party conflict at every practicable interval—the Opposition leaders reproaching Sir R. Peel with perilling the prerogatives of the Crown, and

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troubling the course of legislation, by attempting to govern without a majority in the Commons; and Sir R. Peel inviting a vote of want of confidence as a ground, and as the only ground, on which he would be willing to retire before having laid all his measures before the House. Lord John Russell replied that such a vote could not be called for before the production of the Ministerial measures, without subjecting the Opposition to the charge of unfairness: the obvious reply to which was, that if the Opposition intended to wait for the Ministerial measures before voting want of confidence, they ought to abstain from invidious remark and construction in the mean time. The Opposition—those among them who were not leaders—acknowledged the truth of this, but gave an intimation that the Opposition would choose their own time. After two or three weeks of such antagonism as this, the Whigs chose their opportunity. Their topic was the Appropriation question; their time, the 30th of March.

Final Struggle.

On the 2nd of March, Lord John Russell had intimated that he should bring forward the whole subject of the Irish Church in the latter part of the month, in order to test the position of the Ministry with regard to the country. He waited till then for the Reports of the Commission. A fortnight later, he had doubts of receiving the Reports, and declared them not necessary to his argument, but desirable for the satisfaction of members. On the 18th, he suggested that it would be well to wait for a partial Report which would soon be in the hands of members: on the 19th, he fixed his motion, with notice of a call of the House, for the 30th: and on the 20th, he formally relinquished every kind of demand of Reports, because none would be ready, and he must proceed without them. The 30th, now, was to be the great day of assertion of the distinctive principle of the Whig government, which was to serve as a test of the power of the existing administration, and as the instrument of their overthrow:—the distinctive principle at that period, but not for long; for it was dropped presently after the return of the Whigs to power, and has never been heard of from them since. The conflict now under notice cannot be judged of without the retrospective light cast on it by this fact.

Appropriation Question.

There had been an introductory debate on the Ministerial Resolutions which proposed to convert Irish tithe into a rent charge, redeemable under such conditions as should secure the redemption: and in this debate the Opposition were divided, some objecting to the measure, and others complaining that it was a mere reproduction of the last Whig measure on the same subject; some desiring to proceed, and others thinking it essential to have the decision of the House on the Appropriation question first. In consequence of these differences, the Ministers carried their Resolution.—On the 30th, Lord John Russell repeated his proposition that the House should resolve itself into a Committee for the purpose of considering the state of the Irish Church, with a view to applying any surplus left over from spiritual objects to the education of the people at large, without distinction of religious persuasion.—He declared himself friendly to the principle of an Establishment; adopted the ground of utility laid down by Paley; showed that the Irish Church did not fulfil the condition, and must therefore be reformed; that, in this case, reform involved reduction, and a reduction involved a surplus; and that, as to the application of this surplus, no distinct line of religious appropriation could be drawn

Hansard, xxvii. 83.

Hansard, xxvii. 361—384.

1835. between making additions to the incomes of individual clergymen, and developing the mental and moral capacities of the inhabitants of the country.—It was necessary to advert to the difficulty which the Opposition leaders found themselves in through the delay of the Commissioners' Report. Last year, they had voted down the Appropriation question, on the ground that the requisite information could be obtained only by the Inquiry of the Commissioners; and yet they were now bringing up the question again, without waiting for the results of the Inquiry. The facts on which the question was based were indeed patent enough; and so had they been the year before, and every year of the century; but Lord J. Russell rested his excuse for his inconsistency on the broad declaration of the Premier, that under no circumstances would he consent to the appropriation of ecclesiastical funds to any but strictly ecclesiastical purposes. Such a declaration, prior to the reception of the Reports, justified the Opposition, in their own opinion, in declaring their principle in a manner equally broad. Another consideration, adverse to delay, was that it was highly desirable to come to some vote, or other decision, which should show whether or not the Administration enjoyed the confidence of the House.

Lord Howick's speech was perhaps the most interesting, on the side of the Reformers, delivered during the four nights of this important debate. He lamented that this question was made the test of the stability of the administration, because he believed that the abrupt overthrow of the Ministry would be extremely disastrous to Ireland, as protracting the unsettlement of the tithe question, and causing a confusion which no succeeding government could remedy. For his own part, he would have been glad to have been spared the necessity of declaring his views at such a juncture: but, being called upon to avow his opinion on the one side or the other, he was compelled to declare himself in favour of the principle of Appropriation; and this he did in the most thorough and manly manner.—Sir Robert Peel's speech was what might have been expected from the training of his life, though far from what could be desired from the Prime Minister of the empire. He dwelt upon the compact with the Church in the Act of Union with Ireland; admitted that there were circumstances under which all compacts must be broken, as there were circumstances under which constitutions themselves must be dissolved: but he insisted on proof to demonstration that such moral sacrifices were inevitable before they could be deliberated upon: he denied that any proof of the kind had been offered in the present case, and declared his disbelief that any such could be produced. He insisted that before any convulsive proceeding could be honestly proposed, the innovators should be prepared with a comprehensive and complete new policy to supersede the existing compact: he was justified in asserting, after repeated challenges to his opponents, that no such scheme was prepared: and therefore, though he might be compelled to succumb to an adverse vote, he should ever condemn the procedure of procuring that vote at the expense of the Irish Church, rather than by means of a direct motion of want of confidence in the government. He believed that, on this question, the House was not an expression of national opinion: he believed that his view was that of the large majority of the people: and he therefore felt strong to meet the decision that might ensue from his adherence to his view of duty

Hansard, xxvii. 454.

Hansard, xxvii. 728—760.

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to the Irish Church.—The whole speech proceeded on the assumption that the motion involved the virtual overthrow of the Irish Church, and a consequent convulsion: an assumption which the Reformers reasonably denied: but an analysis of the division seems to show that, with regard to the state of national opinion, the Minister was right. Sound as was the Appropriation principle, in the view of the soundest thinkers of the time, it was not one which interested the general mind; and it was not long before the Whig leaders had to make bitter complaints of the indifference of the people to it. It is much to be wished that the continued existence of the Peel administration of 1835 had been put upon some other issue. The Resolutions in favour of Appropriation, proposed by Lord J. Russell, were carried by the Scotch and Irish members; the English leaving the motion in a minority of nine. Of the Scotch members, 32 were in favour of it, and 17 against it. Of the Irish members, 64 voted with the Opposition, and 37 with the government. The majority against Ministers was 33, in a House of 611 members. The division took place at three o'clock in the morning of the 3rd of April.

TRIUMPH OF OPPOSITION.
Hansard, xxvii. 770.

In Committee, Lord J. Russell moved a resolution, that no measure on the subject of tithes in Ireland could succeed which did not embody the Appropriation principle: and he obtained a majority of 27. This was on the 7th of April. On the 8th, Sir R. Peel announced the resignation of the Cabinet. He avowed that it was with great reluctance that he retired, because his government, supported by the full confidence of the King and by great moral strength in the country, could, as he and his colleagues believed, have speedily settled some public questions, especially that of Irish tithes, which required immediate adjustment, but must now be cast adrift. But they considered that, on the whole, it would be more hurtful still to the public service to continue the attempt to govern the country, unsupported by the confidence of the House of Commons: a confidence which, as was shown by four impressive defeats, they did not possess. There was, as Sir Robert Peel must have known, no need of protestations of personal disinterestedness: for the whole temper and conduct of the Minister during the last five months had been a consistent silent assertion of right feelings, as well as of the most eminent ability. Every one knew that he had had no option about undertaking office; and every one felt and said that he had failed only because parties had been, as yet, too strong for him. The Opposition had gained nothing, during the interval, in general estimation, while he had gained as much as was possible in the time. At this day, there are many who avow that thick mists of prejudice dissolved from before their minds in the course of these five months; and that they now for the first time began to apprehend the character and appreciate the powers of Sir Robert Peel;—a character so peculiar as to require a long observation to obtain a true view of it; and powers which had not, even yet, fully revealed themselves to those who knew him best.

Hansard, xxvii. 970.
RESIGNATION OF THE CABINET.
Hansard, xxvii. 980.

The cheering of the whole House at the conclusion of his speech was long in subsiding. When any thing else could be heard, Lord J. Russell said that "he did not wish to make any comment on what had fallen from the Right Hon. Gentleman, except to express his opinion that the Right Hon. Gentleman had acted entirely in the spirit of the Constitution."

Hansard, xxvii. 985.

Now, then, the Reformers were to have another trial with the King and the country.

CHAPTER II.

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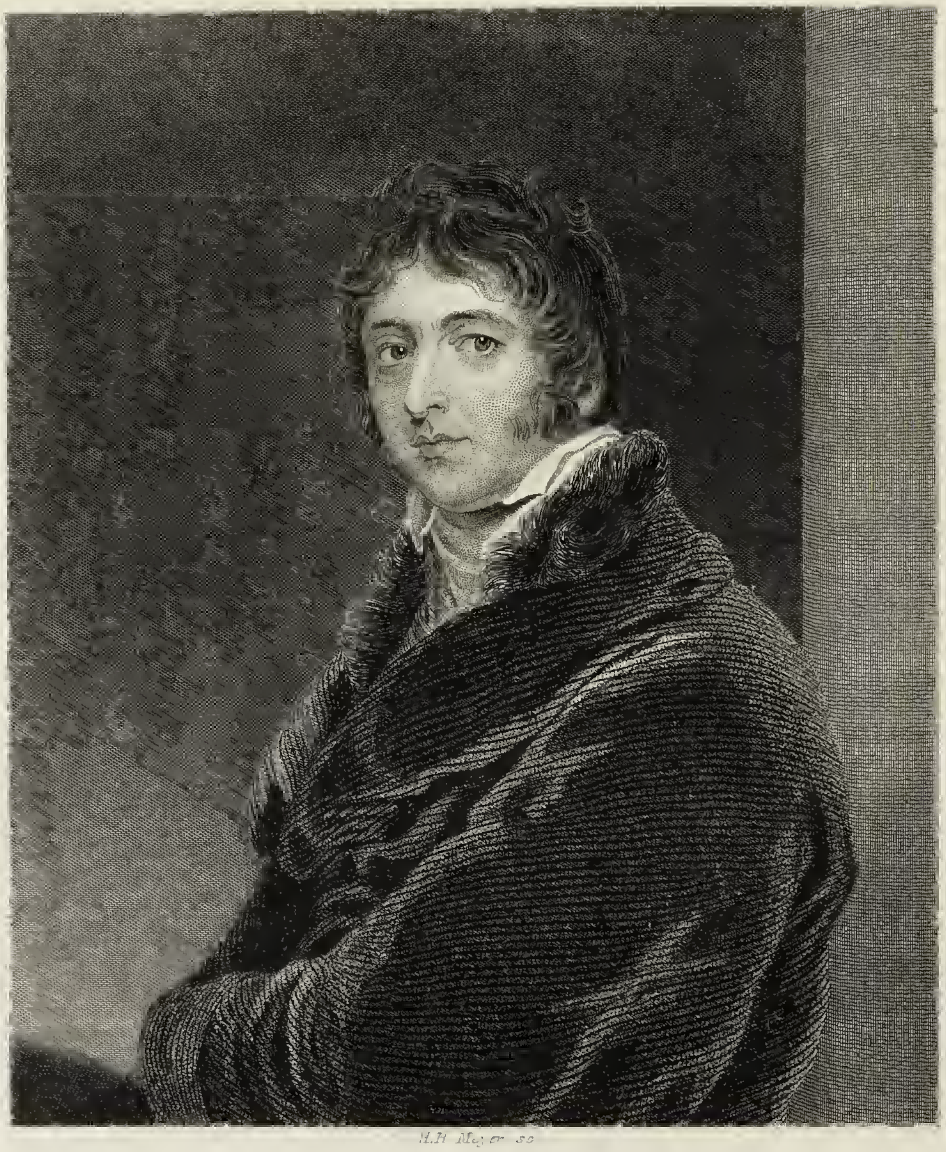
THERE was an interval of ten days before the King and country could feel that there was a government to rely on. It was a season of anxious expectation to all: but few were aware how many and how serious were the causes of anxiety.

Difficulties.

The King sent first for Lord Grey, who declined office, but gave his best advice—which was to send for Lord Melbourne. Thus, the character of the administration might certainly be anticipated: but what were they to do? By choosing the Irish Church question for the overthrow of the Peel administration, the Whigs had pledged themselves to carry the Appropriation principle into practice without delay—even in connexion with the pressing affair of the tithes: whereas the King was not only understood to be opposed to any innovations upon the privileges of the Church, but was remembered to have spontaneously and eagerly pledged himself to the bishops to resist all such innovations.—Again, their present victory had been gained by means of the Irish members, who might and would fairly presume upon the fact, and who must be specially considered in the impending legislation for Ireland; whereas O'Connell had recently been pledging himself, in the hearing of all the world, to obtain organic changes of the greatest importance; and, in the first place, a reform of the House of Lords as sweeping as that of the Commons; and, as usual, he promised a speedy repeal of the Union.—Again, the Whigs had not among them any man of very eminent ability in statesmanship, while many were sufficiently distinguished for talent to be entitled each to set up for himself in regard to the work of his own department. In such a case, the absence of any controlling or harmonizing mind, of any mind which could be truly called that of a statesman, was fatal to all chance of firm and effective rule. Thus it appeared to the most thoughtful people throughout the country, who, remembering how the last Whig administration had disappointed expectation, considered the present prospect to be any thing but exhilarating. The King could not have forgotten these facts, either; nor his alarm at the promised passage of political arms between Lords Brougham and Durham in the winter, from which, but for the intervention of the Peel Ministry, might have arisen a new struggle between the halting and the advancing Reformers. Such a struggle might now, probably, be expected; for the whole country was aware that the radical reform party must become of importance, both as stimulus and support to the Whigs, who were almost powerless without them. It was believed to be an earnest wish of the King's that such a conflict of liberal parties and leaders should be avoided; and that it was a positive stipulation of his that Lord Brougham should not return to the woolsack. Lord Durham's health did not permit of his taking office at home, though it did not interfere with his filling a diplomatic function abroad. So we soon find him in the honourable post of Ambassador to Russia. The Great Seal was for



H. H. Meyer sc.

VISCOUNT MELBOURNE.

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some time in commission, either from the difficulty of finding a Chancellor, or from the danger of making an enemy of Lord Brougham, who was one of the perplexities of the crisis. It had been found impossible to act with him: but it was dangerous and painful to have him for an enemy. If there was any alternative besides these, it was not found. He presently came out broadly in the character of an enemy; and even Lord Melbourne's good-humour and indifference were insufficient to bear up his temper, courage, and spirits, under the hostility of his former colleague—unremitting and bitter as it was, and protracted from session to session—not a little affecting, as we shall see, the political action of the time.

The Melbourne Administration.

Hansard, xxvii. 998.

Lord Melbourne.

The country was aware of this complication of difficulties: the King felt it keenly—the new Ministers alone seemed undismayed by it. It was their way to be confident; and now they were exulting and gay, though the embarrassment of forming themselves into a government was great. It was the 8th of April when Sir R. Peel and the Duke of Wellington announced their relinquishment of office; and it was not till the 18th, after repeated adjournments of the Commons, that the new administration was declared to be completed. Lord Melbourne was the Premier; and in his announcement to the Lords, he spoke of the difficulties of the government as "great and arduous—many indeed of a peculiar and severe kind." Lord Melbourne, however, was understood to be more teazed than dismayed by difficulties. He felt them more than he chose to show; for it was his chief fault to affect a *poco-curante* character of mind unworthy of his sound sense, his actual diligence, and his disinterested love of his country. His patriotism took the form of a love of peace and quiet for society; and that love of peace and quiet proceeded, in a great degree, from the speculative character of his intellect. His views were too comprehensive and too abstract to permit him to perceive the importance of particular questions and particular acts, or to engage his sympathies in temporary occasions, when other men were ardent and resolute. He was not one who would ever stimulate the public mind, or concentrate its energies on prominent ideas or definite enterprises. When occasions arose, he regarded them with philosophy, with sincerity, and with much of the ripe wisdom of the scholar and the gentleman: and, if compelled to act, he acted with diligence and decision: but he waited for them to arise, and conceived that it was his business to do so. He was out of his place as the head of a Reforming Administration, from his inability to originate, and his indisposition to guide. In his function at the Home Office, he had done extremely well. His benign contempt and philosophical compassion for the ignorant herd had made him a calm and merciful ruler of the restless and untoward; while his good sense and sincerity, with his love of public tranquillity, had made him diligent and watchful in anticipation of disturbance. His conduct at the time of the demonstration of the Unions on behalf of the Dorsetshire labourers was admirable; and it is understood that this passage of his political life so recommended and endeared him to the King as to make the present transition of power easier than it could otherwise have been. There had not yet been opportunity for the world to become fully acquainted with his great and fatal fault—fatal at such a crisis of the national mind and fortunes—his affectation of scepticism and *poco-curanteism*. At a time when earnestness was the first

1835. requisite in the *chef* of a reforming administration, the want of it would have been a deadly sin: and the affectation of the want was a moral offence. Unapt for combination, incapable of effective organization, as his colleagues were, his assumed indolence and indifference went to increase the evil, and may be considered one of the causes of their failure to govern the country well. He might consider it amusing to perplex and astonish deputations and single applicants by his extraordinary manners during interviews; but his pranks were of more serious consequence than he supposed, at a time when the people were in earnest, and believed that they had a government to which they might refer their cause. It was very well for him to look philosophically from a window of the Home Office upon the 30,000 Unionists who came to intimidate him—and some few, as he was aware, with the idea of taking his life: but it was a different thing to appear absorbed in blowing a feather, or nursing a sofa-cushion, when giving audience about the abolition of the punishment of death, or receiving a report on Criminal Law Reform, in preparation for the Debate of the night. It was a serious thing to send for a philosopher to offer him a pension, and begin the interview with the remark that he thought such pensions a great humbug. And it did not mend the matter that, on one occasion which leaves the deepest blot upon his name—one occasion which forms an exception to the general kindliness and philosophy of his temper and demeanour—he showed that he really could and did feel in an intensity of party-feeling. In the next reign, he had mournful occasion to write two letters to the mother of Lady Flora Hastings; and then he was hard and ungentlemanly, even cruel, to a degree which deprived him of that reputation for superiority to emotion for which he strove by the affectation of a life. As yet, when he assumed the Premiership in 1835, neither his failings nor his sterling merits were fully known. He was held in general respect and trust, without exciting any high expectation: but it was not long afterwards that the good-humoured and scarcely burlesque character of him given by Sydney Smith in his second letter to Archdeacon Singleton, was laughingly recognised as a capital likeness. The subject and the caricaturist are both gone now; and a solemnity is cast over the mirth of the time; but there is enough of truth and of serious appreciation in the sketch to make it valuable as a permanent illustration. "Viscount Melbourne," says Sydney Smith, "declared himself quite satisfied with the Church as it is; but if the public had any desire to alter it, they might do as they pleased. He might have said the same thing of the monarchy, or of any other of our institutions; and there is in the declaration a permissiveness and good-humour which in public men has seldom been exceeded. Carelessness, however, is but a poor imitation of genius; and the formation of a wise and well-reflected plan of Reform conduces more to the lasting fame of a Minister than that affected contempt of duty which every man sees to be mere vanity, and a vanity of no very high description.—But, if the truth must be told, our Viscount is somewhat of an impostor. Every thing about him seems to betoken careless desolation: any one would suppose from his manner that he was playing at chuck-farthing with human happiness; that he was always on the heel of pastime; that he would giggle away the Great Charter, and decide by the method of teetotum whether my Lords the Bishops should or should not retain their seats in the House of Lords. Works, iii. 216.

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All this is the mere vanity of surprising, and making us believe that he can play with kingdoms as other men can with ninepins. Instead of this lofty nebulo, this miracle of moral and intellectual felicities, he is nothing more than a sensible honest man, who means to do his duty to the Sovereign and to the country. Instead of being the ignorant man he pretends to be, before he meets the deputation of Tallow Chandlers in the morning, he sits up half the night talking with Thomas Young about melting and skimming, and then, though he has acquired knowledge enough to work off a whole vat of prime Leicester tallow, he pretends next morning not to know the difference between a dip and a mould. In the same way, when he has been employed in reading Acts of Parliament, he would persuade you that he has been reading 'Cleghorn on the Beatitudes,' or 'Pickler on the Nine Difficult Points.' Neither can I allow to this Minister (however he may be irritated by the denial) the extreme merit of indifference to the consequences of his measures. I believe him to be conscientiously alive to the good or evil that he is doing, and that his caution has more than once arrested the gigantic projects of the Lycurgus of the Lower House. I am sorry to hurt any man's feelings, and to brush away the magnificent fabric of levity and gaiety he has reared; but I accuse our Minister of honesty and diligence; I deny that he is careless or rash; he is nothing more than a man of good understanding, and good principle, disguised in the eternal and somewhat wearisome affectation of a political Roué."

Mr. Charles Grant.

There was another *poco-curante* Minister in the Cabinet, though it might be felt that one was enough. Mr. Charles Grant, afterwards Lord Glenelg, was Colonial Secretary; and events were at hand which made his post as important as any in the Cabinet. He was regarded with universal good-will for his quiet steadiness in the advocacy of liberal principles: and he was respected as a man of large information and clear sagacity. But his indolence was extreme;—an indolence which was so thoroughly constitutional as to be inveterate; and he naturally failed in an office which requires the powers of more than one man to fulfil its duties, be his energy what it may.—To make up for these lovers of ease, there were half a dozen men whose activity, in one form or another, nobody could question:—Lord Palmerston, Lord John Russell, Lord Howick, Mr. Spring Rice, Lord Duncannon, and Mr. Poulett Thomson.—As for Lord Palmerston, "the world was all before him where to choose" to make England felt and talked about, for good or for evil. "Perfidious Albion" was sure to be the world's topic while he was in power.—

Lord John Russell.

Lord John Russell was now to show—and the nation was truly anxious to learn—whether his activity would now be measured and sustained, under the responsibility of having wrested the government out of the hands of other men, and taken it into the grasp of himself and his friends, instead of requiring, as before, to be kept up by the pressure of deputations, and demands from without. He had to show whether he could originate as well as persist, and whether his persistance could hold out to the point of success. He had to show whether he could keep in check his rash courage and self-confidence, learn to abstain from prophecy and pledge, perceive that he could be and often was mistaken, and leave off making declarations during the parliamentary recess which the next session compelled him to stultify. No one doubted his

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readiness to undertake; the question was what he could accomplish. No one doubted his courage: the question was of his ultimate efficiency. No one doubted his patriotism: the question was of its scope and enlightenment. No one doubted his cleverness: the question was whether he had enough of philosophy, candour, and sustained energy, to raise his cleverness into statesmanship. No one looked to him for originality—for the genius of statesmanship: if he had had it, it must have appeared before this time: but of the secondary order of statesmanship, the ability which can appropriate, and organize, and vivify, the floating wisdom of the political world, and make it a ruling power, he might yet show himself capable. He had now a fair field; and that his own expectations were sanguine was shown by his determination to obtain power, and his exultation in having obtained it.—Lord Howick went to the War Office, with a high reputation for honesty, diligence, and courage, and a fair one for ability, to begin with.—Mr. Spring Rice, smart and good-humoured, but not yet distinguished for financial wisdom, became Chancellor of the Exchequer; an appointment which the critical Sydney Smith thought somewhat rash. "If," said he, "Mr. Spring Rice were to go into holy orders, great would be the joy of the three per cents." But, as was said before, there is no knowing what kind of Chancellor of the Exchequer any man will make till he is tried.—The merits of Lord Duncannon were not fully appreciated till he went to Ireland, some years afterwards: but the few who now took an interest in the management of the Woods and Forests department saw that its work was thoroughly well done, with quiet wisdom and strenuous diligence.—Mr. Poulett Thomson was the only member of the government admitted from the Radical Reform party. He was President of the Board of Trade, for which his knowledge and experience and sound economical principles well fitted him. He entered the Cabinet on the stipulation that he should have perfect freedom in advocating the repeal of the Corn laws.—Ireland was well treated in the apportionment of office.

Irish Administration.

The good-humoured and accomplished Lord Mulgrave, afterwards Lord Normanby, with his demonstrative character and manners, was just the man to engage the admiration and good-will of the impressible Irish; while the benevolent and chivalrous Lord Morpeth as Secretary, and the no less chivalrous Drummond as Under Secretary, with his wisdom, his highly-principled diligence, and excellent habits of business, took care that the hard and serious work of the government of Ireland should be duly performed. As the case of Ireland was not yet understood, and the true and permanent principle of her rule had not yet been found, any policy attempted at that time could be but of temporary effect: and it was but a few years before her rulers avowed that their policy—of conciliation—was "exhausted:" but, as a preparation for a higher system of statesmanship, and a means of getting over the transition from a bad old system to an indeterminate new one, it was true, as was said at the time, that Ireland had never been so well governed as during the Viceroyalty of Lord Mulgrave.—As for the rest—Lord Lansdowne was President of the Council;—Lord Auckland went to the Admiralty;—Lord Holland was Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster;—and Sir J. C. Hobhouse was at the head of the India Board.

Two great Questions.

The new Ministers pledged themselves to two great measures as the principal work of the remainder of the session;—Municipal Reform, and the

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settlement of the Irish Church. The Irish Church question was, at the moment and on principle, the most important of any question of the time, not only because it had broken up two Administrations, but because it involved the principle for whose sake the Whigs now possessed themselves of office, and by which, therefore, they were pledged to stand or fall.

Hansard, xxviii. 1319.

The Irish Church. 1835—38.

On the 26th of June, Lord Morpeth brought forward the ministerial measure. He avowed that if the question now were whether or not to establish the Protestant Church in Ireland, no sane man would dream of such an act. But the Church was there, with all its long prescription, and its implication with the civil polity of the empire; and it was not proposed to touch its foundation, or disturb its framework. If it were to endure, however, it must be made a less exasperating spectacle than it was to the bulk of the people among whom it stood. The measure which he brought forward actually consisted, as was presently pointed out by the Opposition, of two parts; though the framers considered the two so intimately connected that it was an act of opposition in itself to separate them. The first provided for the conversion of tithe into a rent-charge, in much the same way as in the last two measures proposed:—the other provided for the appropriation of the accruing surplus to the religious and moral instruction of all classes of the community, without distinction of religious persuasions. After two readings, the proposal to go into Committee was made on the 21st of July, when Sir R. Peel renewed his opposition to the second part of the measure, on the two grounds, that there would be no surplus: and that, if there were, it would be a breach of faith to the Irish Church to apply its funds out of its own pale, and for any but strictly ecclesiastical purposes.—The Chancellor of the Exchequer stated that the House had decided, after long debates, that the question of appropriation was connected with the concession to the tithe owners of the £1,000,000 advanced to them in preceding years; he conceived that this precluded the division of the measure into two parts: and he declared the purpose of this partition to be to get rid of the Appropriation clause: which was undoubtedly true.—Lord Morpeth warned the legislature of the consequences of drawing back from the Resolutions recently passed in that House. The Irish were now aware that parliament knew of the parishes vacant of Protestants—of the churches without flocks, of the incomes paid for no service—of the provision for the extension of that Protestantism which was not extending—of the desperate poverty and ignorance of the Catholic peasantry who had hitherto been called upon to pay, instead of to benefit by these funds; and now that these things were admitted—now that the principle of Appropriation had been sanctioned by that House—it was too late to recede. On a division, the Ministers had a majority of 37—the number being made up, not only by Irish members, but by a majority of 8 among the English and Scotch members. The Bill was now safe in the Lower House; and the Ministers proceeded to add, in Committee, a clause providing for the advance of £50,000, from the Consolidated Fund, in anticipation of the surplus to accrue, for purposes of general education in Ireland. The reason for this was that there was said to be much exasperation in some Irish parishes, where the new arrangements were not to take effect during the life of the present incumbents: and it was believed that the safety and tranquillity of these clergymen would be promoted by a begin-

Appropriation Question.

Hansard, xxix. 790.

Hansard, xxix. 840.

Hansard, xxix. 1067.

Hansard, xxix. 1116.

1835. ning of the educational expenditure being made at once.—The Radical reform members opposed the concession of the £1,000,000 advanced as a loan: and the Ministers admitted the encroachment on the intentions of the legislature, but pleaded the much more serious evil which would ensue from attempts to recover what was irrecoverable.—The Bill passed the Commons on the 12th of August, and was read a second time in the Lords on the 20th.—In Committee, the Lords struck out all the Appropriation clauses, by a majority of 97, in a House of 179.—The Ministers abandoned the whole Bill; and thus the matter stood over till the next year. Hansard, xxx. 934. It was a great evil, in the existing state of the Irish Church; but it was felt to be worth enduring for the sake of the essential principle involved in the measure; a principle by which not only the Whig Administration, but the connexion of England and Ireland, and the religious liberties of a nation, must ultimately stand or fall. If, three years later, the Whig administration drew back from their obligation to stand or fall by this principle, neither they nor any other human power could alter its relation to the political connexion of Ireland, and to the religious liberties of a nation.

1836. The struggle was renewed the next spring. On the 25th of April Lord Morpeth brought forward the tithe measure, Hansard, xxxiii. 204. about which the two parties in both Houses would have agreed, if it had stood without the appropriation provision. This last was not brought forward in the express and conspicuous manner of preceding years; but Lord Morpeth gave notice that it was involved inextricably in the Bill. As yet, Ministers were evidently resolved to stand or fall by it. He was now able to declare that there would certainly be a surplus—he believed of nearly £100,000; but it would not be available for a considerable time.—Lord Stanley moved an amendment, consisting of a proposal of the tithe measure, without reference to appropriation. Amidst the general resemblance of the debates in successive years, there are interesting divergences of topic, and changes of views to be noticed. This year, there were three at least that were remarkable. The Opposition had certainly advanced considerably in their estimate of the reforms that were essential to the maintenance of the Irish Church. They spoke more freely of the disgrace of the spectacle of an overpaid and an underpaid clergy within the same area: they were more earnest about equalization of incomes, and more bold about the prosecution of the needful inquiries.—Another most pregnant fact was that Lord Stanley complained of the cause of disagreement as not practical. What the government stood out for was a mere abstract principle—"a shadow" which they had better give up for "the substance" of his plan of details: Hansard, xxxiii. 1274. and he implored them to relinquish the pursuit of what was so ineffectual—such a mere idea—and unite with their opponents in coming to practical business. Often as we are compelled to mourn the moral scepticism, the destitution of faith, which is prevalent in the political world, and which is the just ground of the deep disrepute of legislative assemblies, almost universally, it is not often that we meet, in Hansard or elsewhere, with so open an avowal as this —that principles are "the shadow," and arrangements "the substance"—that it is not practical for the legislature to resolve, by clear implication, that there is a world of morals above and beyond the law, to which mankind must occasionally resort for the regeneration of their laws. To admit this solemnly and deliberately, in full conclave, with a spectacle of murder and famine before

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the eyes, and the curses and groans and wailings of a suffering people filling the air, is an unpractical thing for a legislature to do, while they might be busy in ordering a plan of distribution of money—some more here and something less there, the suffering of the multitude remaining untouched. Lord Stanley was so far from understanding that a principle is the most substantial and enduring of realities, that he evidently thought he was speaking loftily and patriotically in making his unphilosophical and degrading appeal. He was sure there would be no surplus; and he supposed that settled the matter of the "principle" being unpractical.

The third noticeable incident was that the debate turned, for a little while, upon the important point—what is the object of a church establishment—to propagate doctrine, or to enlighten the people by instruction and training. Sir James Graham thought the former; Lord J. Russell, the latter. It was for the former object that the Protestant Church was established in Ireland; and it was to the latter that Ministers now desired to overrule it. It was truly a controversy for whose principle any government might be proud to struggle to the death: but, till now, no express discussion of the principle of a religious establishment seems to have been entered into during the debates of the last few years. The historical fact of the case in question seems to be, that the church in Ireland was established for proselyting purposes: that these purposes failed: that, at the date before us, many were unwilling to give up the hope of yet converting the Irish to Protestantism, while, on the other hand, those who saw the hopelessness of such an aspiration, and who neither dared to touch the foundations of the Church in Ireland, nor to let her remain as she was, believed that the only chance for Church and nation was in connecting the establishment with large and beneficent general objects. The case might have been simplified, and the strife softened, if all parties had spoken out—some admitting the disappointment of their missionary aims, and others acknowledging that they were supplying a wholly new foundation for the Church; but no nearer approach to such frankness was made than by the slight and superficial controversy during the present debate.—On this occasion, the Ministerial majority was 39; and the Bill passed the Commons on the 15th of July.

Hansard, xxxiii. 1392—3.

Hansard, xxxv. 241.

The Lords again threw out the Appropriation clauses, passing the rest of the Bill, with slight alterations in some clauses regarding stipends. These last gave occasion to Lord J. Russell, and, as he believed, justification to refuse the amended Bill, as sent down, through a breach of privilege—the Lords having interfered with a money bill. The question was one difficult of decision—the question whether this was a breach of privilege or not; and the Speaker himself avowed the nicety of the point. At length, the motion for rejecting the altered Bill was carried by a majority of 29; and once more, the controversy was adjourned to another year.

Hansard, xxxv. 779.

1837.

In the royal Speech, at the opening of the session of 1837, we find a recommendation of the subject of Tithes, among others, to the attention of Parliament: but the discussion of the topic was intercepted by the death of the King. The argument on the principle of Appropriation may, however, be observed proceeding, under other terms, throughout the discussion on the

Hansard, xxxvi. 4.

1837.

Church Rates.

measure of the Chancellor of the Exchequer for the solution of the question of Church rates. The temper of parties interested in church questions was at this time bitter in the extreme. Lord Lyndhurst had made use of an expression about the Irish Catholics, haughty, hard, and unpatriotic, but still, by no means conveying, when taken with its context, the full import which was attributed to it. He called the Irish Catholics "aliens in blood, in language, and in religion." This language was naturally seized upon by the Irish agitators, and reprobated by the English Liberals who were authenticating, in every possible way, a conciliatory policy in Ireland. A striking scene took place in the House of Commons, late one February night, when Lord Lyndhurst was seen sitting under the gallery, and Mr. Shiel was speaking. On Mr. Shiel's use of the word "alien," uttered with the strongest emphasis, the cheering from the Liberal side of the House broke forth, and continued till it rose almost to a confusion of yells. The members appear to have had no compassion for a man sitting by to hear such reprobation, while prevented from explaining and remonstrating. Never was man more abundantly punished for an insolent expression; and the worst part of the punishment must have been the seeing daily, in all companies and in every newspaper, the words assumed to mean much more than he had intended them to convey, both from the temper in which they were quoted, and from their being separated from his argument.—Then there was O'Connell's National Association, threatening and boastful:—then, there were the Bishops meeting at Lambeth, on the first announcement of the Ministerial Church-rate measure, to prepare a declaration against it before it was brought before them as legislators:—and there were the Ministers vehemently resenting this method of opposition:—and there were legislators and constituencies debating the question of the exclusion of the Bishops from Parliament. The times were indeed bitter and angry; and the Appropriation question was hardly likely to fare better than in preceding years.

Spectator, 1837, p. 169.

Hansard, xxxvi. 1207—1252.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer showed that something must be done to amend the unquiet and disgraceful state of things that existed in relation to the payment of Church rates. While the rate was voted by the vestries, and the vestries were composed of persons of every variety of faith, it was clear that the obtaining of a rate at all depended on the agreement of parties who had for a long time been disagreeing more and more. If the rate were refused, there were no means of obtaining it; and, in point of fact, Church rates had ceased in Sheffield since 1818; and in Manchester, none had been levied since the beginning of the contest in 1833. It was not for a member of the government to give a full report of the reasons of the Dissenters for refusing to pay Church rates: and Mr. Spring Rice did not attempt it: but there was nobody in the House who was not aware that opulent men, to whom time and trouble were of more account than money, had undergone toil and vexation to a great extent rather than pay very small sums for Church rates; and that several persons of high respectability had gone to prison in the cause. Many who paid tithes, without dispute though unwillingly—paid tithes because the payment was a charge involved in the purchase of their land—refused to pay Church rates, having good legal assurance that they were not a legal charge, and being conscientiously reluctant to contribute, except under a clear legal obligation, to the maintenance of the places and forms of a worship which they disapproved.—The proposal of the government was to place Church Lands under management which should cause them to yield more than at present; and from the improved income to pay Church rates, and then hand over the surplus to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners. The church and conservatism smelt a savour of the Appropriation principle in this plan, and they resisted it accordingly. They could not say, indeed, that the surplus was to be appropriated to other than ecclesiastical purposes; but they complained that it would intercept the Dissenters' money; and declared that the Church was entitled to all increase of income from her own possessions, and to the Dissenters' contributions too. Therefore it was that fifteen Bishops assembled at Lambeth, and the Archbishop of Canterbury delivered his protest against the Ministerial measure before it had left the Commons; and the Chancellor of the Exchequer carried his measure in the Lower House by a majority of only five. This was a virtual defeat, and the Ministers dropped the Bill, which they had put forth as the leading measure of the Session.—On the 12th of June Lord John Russell moved for a committee to inquire into the management of Church lands, with a view to the improvement of their revenues. He declared that this had no connexion whatever with the principle of Appropriation: but the Church and the Conservatives believed that it had, and they exerted themselves against it accordingly. Three divisions took place on this occasion which show the temper of the House on the question of church property. A direct proposal on the part of a Radical reform member, Mr. Harvey, for the abolition of Church rates, was voted down by a majority of 431—only 58 members voting for the motion.—Lord J. Russell's motion obtained a majority of 86 in favour of an inquiry into the management of Church lands.—Mr. Goulburn proposed an addition of a pledge from Parliament that any new funds accruing from improved management should be applied to the extension of religious instruction by the clergy to the members of the established church alone; and the ministerial majority against the motion was now only 26. From this it appeared that the Church would accept of any improvement of her own revenues, but would neither forego funds derived from the Dissenters, nor extend her expenditure beyond her own members.

1837.

Annual Register, 1837, 85.

Hansard, xxxviii. 1073.

Hansard, xxxviii. 1384.

Hansard, xxxviii. 1433—4.

Thus stood the matter when the elections took place, after the death of the King. The Church question was the leading one on the hustings: and, though the Appropriation question was that by which the Ministers had turned out their predecessors, and by which they were pledged to stand or fall, the Ministerial majority in Parliament was sensibly lessened in the new House. The government were discouraged accordingly, and they began to draw back from their pledge—no doubt, from relaxing in their sense of being pledged on behalf of the Appropriation principle: and the result was seen in the next Session, in a way fatal to their political honour.

On the 27th of March, 1838, Sir R. Peel inquired of Lord J. Russell what course he meant to pursue with regard to Irish tithe; and whether he intended to bring forward the Appropriation question again, in accordance with the Resolutions of 1835. The reply was that the Ministers intended to place the tithe question "on a ground altogether new," as it appeared useless and irri-

1838.

Hansard, xli. 1315.

1838.

Surrender of the Appropriation Principle.

tating, after a conflict of four years, to prolong an argument which produced no result. This announcement, unaccompanied by any hint now of standing or falling by the great principle by which the government had come into office, prepared Sir R. Peel and the Church party for their approaching triumph over the honour of their opponents;—the most mournful of triumphs. The estimate of that honour was already so low that men of every party in the House declared, a few weeks afterwards, that they perceived—some with fear and some with hope—that they saw the Appropriation principle lurking amidst the ambiguities of Lord J. Russell's new resolutions on the Tithe question; ambiguities which were themselves discreditable on an occasion which was professed to be a decisive one.

Hansard, xlii. 1203.

Reception of the Surrender.

Hansard, xlii. 1325—1345.

On the 14th of May, Sir Thomas Acland moved the rescinding of the celebrated resolutions of the House, of April, 1835, in favour of the Appropriation question; and then broke out Sir R. Peel's emotions of triumph. He told the whole story;—how he offered to carry a tithe measure like the present, and was taunted with having derived it from the preceding government;—how he was compelled to retire because such a measure must, on principle, as his opponents said, be connected with Appropriation clauses;—how those opponents staked their political existence on such a connexion;—and how they were now proposing to carry the Tithe measure, after all, without the Appropriation; introducing it by resolutions so ambiguously worded that no one could be sure of what they meant. The true reply would have been that the Ministers, finding that they could not stand by their principle, were ready to fall by it; that they had been mistaken about the interest of the public mind in the question, and would accept the consequences of their mistake; and that, having faith in their principle, the only thing impossible to them was to surrender it. Their actual reply was that their convictions on the question were unaltered; but that they surrendered the principle.—Sir Thomas Acland's motion for rescinding the memorable resolutions was lost by a majority of only 19. When the time arrived for the Tithe debate—the 2d of July—the Appropriation question was once more brought forward by one who had never wavered upon it, and who was universally admitted to be, from his early action and steady advocacy, the highest authority on the subject—Mr. Ward. He, too, told the whole story over again; and the effect was withering upon the reputation of the Ministers. Referring to a pamphlet which, in 1835, had foretold that Sir R. Peel must go out upon this question, he said:—"The Right Hon. Baronet adhered to his opinions, sacrificed place and power to his opinions, and ceased to be a Minister; but they must have a new edition of the pamphlet to tell them how those who rose into power upon the Right Hon. Baronet's fall could now adopt his opinions, and make them their rule upon this occasion, and do so without the sacrifice of character and station." The only Minister who offered any reply to Mr. Ward was Lord Morpeth; and he made no reference to the main point of the difficulty. He dwelt upon the courage and perseverance of Ministers in having three times asserted their principle, and on their prudence and love of peace shown in dropping it now: but he said nothing of any obligation to resign. Mr. Ward's motion was, of course, lost by a large majority—the Ministers themselves voting against it. But his speech was not lost: and it has probably not yet fulfilled all its purposes. A principle may

Hansard, xlii. 1353.

Hansard, xliii. 1181.

Hansard, xliii. 1184—7.

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be trodden down; but it can never be extinguished. When the one in question revives, and men turn back to the history of the struggle, they may take warning and guidance from the record. While studying it, they will pause upon the words of another highly-principled member, Mr. Grote, who said, in regard to this transaction, that it afforded melancholy proof of the way in which great principles were made subservient to party purposes; and that he believed history would note this as one of the most discreditable instances of tergiversation on record.—The Whig government now evinced a moral scepticism equal to that of Sir James Graham on the same subject. They praised their own "wisdom" in not sacrificing the substance to the shadow, and their devotion to the general good in surrendering a principle which was found not to be generally appreciated.

Hansard, xliv. 660.

It is true, the principle was not generally appreciated; and government was not duly supported in upholding it: but not the less for this were the Ministers lowered in the estimation of the nation at large. It might be only the thoughtful, and those familiarized with the philosophy of society, who saw the whole scope of the controversy, and were interested in it accordingly; but all could see—and most did see—that the Whig ministry did not govern the people, but was governed by them, and took, not merely suggestion and stimulus from the popular will, but guidance and control. There was less demonstration of disapprobation at the moment than earnest men hoped, and perhaps than the Ministers feared: but they never recovered a high position in the respect and confidence of the country.

Such is the history of the Appropriation question which determined the return of the Whigs to power in 1835.

CHAPTER III.

1835.

Second great Question.

On their return to power, in April, 1835, the Whig ministers had, as we have seen, promised two leading measures during the session. We have pursued the history of one. The other is the large and just measure which, next to Reform of Parliament, is their chief title to honourable remembrance. It was during the session of 1835 that the Municipal Reform bill was carried.

Municipal Reform.

This measure could not precede Parliamentary Reform; but it was sure to follow it. It could not precede Parliamentary Reform, because a large proportion of members were sent by the corrupt boroughs where corporation abuses were the most flagrant: and to attack those abuses was to attack parliamentary corruption itself, in the presence of the delegates of that corruption. Every borough proprietor and delegate would stand up for his own borough corporation, aided by others to whom he would render a similar service in their hour of need. And the people would not have borne to see the most insignificant boroughs—those which had no parliamentary representation—called to account and laid under discipline while the great parliamentary towns were passed over. So it was necessary to purge Parliament first of the close-borough class of members before the corporations could be exposed, though the evil of municipal corruption had become well nigh intolerable for a long course of years.—It was not merely the corruption of the old municipal bodies which made their reform a necessary consequence of the regeneration of parliament: it was also that the people were resolved to possess and use the rights of the franchise provided for them by the Reform Bill, but intercepted by the oppressive maladministration of the borough corporations. The franchise was of little use in a town where the corporate officers elected and re-elected themselves and each other for ever; and employed the trust funds which should have healed the sick, and sheltered the old, and instructed the young, in bribing a depraved class of electors; where the town-clerks were nominated by the patrons of boroughs, to countenance electoral subserviency, and do the dirty work of venal electioneering, and where the efforts of honest electors might be neutralized through the public-houses alone, if there were no other way—the publicans being dependent for their licenses upon justices of the peace, who had, as a body, no relish whatever for freedom of parliament. Such a state of things could not be tolerated by the men who had won the Reform Bill, with the intention of using it: and the authors of the Reform Bill were gratefully supported by the majority of the middle classes in their first movement in 1833, and their prosecution of the enterprise on their return to power in 1835.

Corporation Commission.

The first move was the appointment of a commission under the Great Seal to twenty gentlemen, whose charge was "to proceed with the utmost despatch

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to inquire as to the existing state of the municipal corporations in England and Wales, and to collect information respecting the defects in their constitution—to make inquiry into their jurisdiction and powers, and the administration of justice, and in all other respects; and also into the mode of electing and appointing the members and officers of such corporations, and into the privileges of the freemen and other members thereof, and into the nature and management of the income, revenues, and funds, of the said corporations."

While these twenty gentlemen were about their work, pairing off among the districts into which they had divided England and Wales, how busy were many minds—some with dread of exposure and of loss of perquisites;—some with calculations how best to make their fortunes by claims for compensation for offices which they saw would be taken from them;—some with planning how best to evade or mislead the inquiries of the commissioners, and others how best to stimulate and aid these inquiries;—some with the hope of seeing at length a chance allowed for the culture of public and private virtue, through the extinction of borough corruption;—others rejoicing to see that the principle of centralization was not to be extended beyond institutions where it was absolutely indispensable; and many, very many, looking back into history with a new interest, whether hopeful or melancholy, now that the time had come for an essential modification of an institution which forms a part of the body of that history from end to end! Polit. Dict. ii. 380—385.

Rise and History of Municipal Institutions.

First, they saw groups of Romans sitting down here and there in the land, and arranging their own local affairs, while living under the general law of Rome.—Then, there were the Saxons, who, on arriving, found the town communities fitted, by their municipal practice, for adaptation to their own more general system of self-government, which extended equally over town and country. They put their boroughreve at the head of the town government (by popular election) as they placed their shirereves over the shires, to collect the revenues of the state.—And then came the Normans, who no longer permitted the boroughreve to be elected by his neighbours, but put in his place a bailiff appointed by the king,—as the Shirereve was superseded by the Viscount.—Then appears in the history, the way of escape from the oppressions of the bailiff found by the citizens;—the offer to the king of a larger sum, to be transmitted direct to his exchequer, than could be collected by the bailiff, who, besides, absorbed some by the way: and next there is the ready acceptance of these terms, and the grant of a long succession of charters, granting the boroughs to the burgesses in fee-farm; that is, to be their own, as long as they should punctually pay to the royal exchequer the crown rent agreed upon. And here, when the relieved inhabitants were returning to their habits of municipal freedom, does the familiar name of Mayor first present itself. The Saxon townsmen had no cause to love the title of bailiff; and they took, instead, the Norman name which signified the chief municipal officer of a town. At this time, the burgesses or townsmen were those who had a settled abode in the town, were members of some one trade company, and shared in the liberties and free customs of the town. This was, in fact, a household qualification, distinguishing the citizens from temporary residents, (for trade or other purposes,) who neither paid taxes nor enjoyed the privileges of citizenship. The means of obtaining the franchise seem to have arisen simply out

1835. of the conveniences of the case. A man's settled residence was most easily ascertained through the circumstances of his birth, apprenticeship, and marriage. A man who obtained trading advantages by a settlement in a particular town would gladly obtain citizenship by purchase. As for obtaining the freedom of any borough through the gift of the inhabitants, it was obviously a substantial advantage in those days, as well as the honour that it is, by traditional associations, in ours.—In the time of Edward III. we find an authorization of the residence in towns of men who were not free of the borough—the citizens being empowered to make them contribute to the public expenditure; and hence it is easily seen how those guilds or trade companies became important, which verified the position and rights of every resident within the town walls, and were the settled method of access to the privileges of citizenship. We can see these men and times with the mind's eye;—the great middle class, of which history has told so little, busy within their towns,—busy about their private affairs, their manufactures and their commerce,—busy about their local affairs, their magistracy, their criminals, the defences of their walls, and the amount and management of their funds,—and all idle and indifferent about those wars, those struggles, among princes and nobles, of which history tells so much. The chroniclers of the time saw the great movements of the country,—the march of armies, the gatherings of the great barons and their retainers, and the exterminating conflicts on noted fields of battle; but they knew little of the conclaves of townsmen within their walls, to take measures of defence against the threats and exactions of neighbouring nobles, for the protection of their ever-expanding commerce, and for the choice of their annual delegate—their mayor—who was to be answerable to the King for the payment of the duties to the Crown.—In course of time, the citizens obtained release from the necessity of sending their chief magistrate to London, and had permission by charter to take the oaths of their own officers, or to tender them to the constable of the nearest royal castle.—Thus far, the functions of the town magistracy were executive only. The making of local laws was a separate affair, and had been managed by general assemblies, weekly or other, which agreed upon regulations binding upon all.—As numbers increased, and trade extended, this became inconvenient; and a representative system grew up; and with it a distinction of classes, which originated a town aristocracy, and the danger (which became an abuse, increasing from century to century) of that mutual election and self-election which ripened into our modern and intolerable grievance of close corporations. In Henry the Third's reign, an attempt was made in London by "the more discreet of the city" to elect a mayor in opposition to the popular voice; but the citizens met at St. Paul's Cross, and showed that the innovators were less "discreet" than they had thought themselves. The discreet of the city were happily defeated in their aim.—Among the charters of Henry VII., there is one establishing a self-elective council of aldermen in Bristol. But the great contest—the greatest recorded in the history of English municipal institutions—took place after the Reformation, when the question of a parliament disposed in favour of a Catholic or Protestant occupant of the throne became all-important to government. Then it rested with the sheriffs to declare which were parliamentary and which non-parliamentary boroughs. The parliamentary could

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not be put down; but less important ones might be raised up; and in the three reigns succeeding Henry the Eighth's, we find sixty-three places sending members to parliament which were before, or of late, unrepresented. There was little or no enlargement of popular freedom in this proceeding: for the Crown took care that the accession should tell in its own favour. It assumed the right of giving Governing Charters, by which it controlled municipal operations; most of the new order of charters giving to small councils—of express royal appointment, and indissoluble self-elective powers—the privilege of local government, and even, in many cases, of election of parliamentary representatives.

Hence was derived the pernicious power of the Stuarts; and from this period we may date the subjugation of British political independence. The royal and aristocratic power over the commonalty was not overthrown even by the Revolution; for subsequent charters were framed upon the model of those of the Charleses and Jameses: and, as the Corporation Commissioners tell us in their Report, "the charters of George III. do not differ in this respect from those granted in the worst period of the history of these boroughs."

Report of Commissioners.

To those who felt, as well as said, that the welfare of a nation depends on its public and private virtue, who saw that the private vice of a community was found to be in substantial accordance with its municipal corruption, and who looked back through this avenue of history so as to perceive how low our people had sunk from the municipal freedom and purity of long preceding ages, it was consolatory to read the bold exposure of the case by the Corporation Commissioners, in their Report of 1835. From this Report, two Commissioners dissented, on grounds which had no influence on subsequent proceedings; and the following statement bears the signatures of sixteen: "Even where these institutions exist in their least imperfect form, and are most rightfully administered, they are inadequate to the wants of the present state of society. In their actual condition, where not productive of evil, they exist, in a great majority of instances, for no purpose of general utility. The perversion of municipal institutions to political ends has occasioned the sacrifice of local interests to party purposes, which have been frequently pursued through the corruption and demoralization of the electoral bodies.—In conclusion, we report to your Majesty that there prevails among the inhabitants of a great majority of the incorporated towns a general, and, in our opinion, a just dissatisfaction with their municipal institutions, a distrust of the self-elected municipal councils, whose powers are subjected to no popular control, and whose acts and proceedings, being secret, are unchecked by the influence of public opinion—a distrust of the municipal magistracy, tainting with suspicion the local administration of justice, and often accompanied with contempt of the persons by whom the law is administered—a discontent under the burthens of local taxation, while revenues that ought to be applied for the public advantage are diverted from their legitimate use, and are sometimes wastefully bestowed for the benefit of individuals, sometimes squandered for purposes injurious to the character and morals of the people. We therefore feel it to be our duty to represent to your Majesty that the existing municipal corporations of England and Wales neither possess nor deserve the confidence and respect

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of your Majesty's subjects, and that a thorough reform must be effected before they can become, what we humbly submit to your Majesty they ought to be, useful and efficient instruments of local government."

Existing State of Things.

It is evident at a glance that a thorough reform must meet with vehement opposition. The means of getting up such opposition lay mainly in the hands of those whose corruption was to be exposed, and whose gains were to be abolished. In the worst towns, there was the strongest body of corrupt or bigotted officials who held the worst portion of the inhabitants under their control, while those who most desired reform were precisely those who were least in a position to make themselves heard. The noble-minded operative who had refused 50*l.* for his vote was borne down by the noisy, tipsy freeman, whose "loyalty" was very profitable to him. The benevolent and painstaking quiet citizen who strongly suspected that the funds of an orphan girls' school went to support a brothel, or who could never obtain admission to a charity trust because it was supposed that he would remonstrate against the frequent banquets at the expense of the trust—the peaceable dissenter who found himself put aside in times of public danger, because the loyal corporation charged him with wishing to burn down the cathedral—the unexceptionable tradesman, who found himself cut out by the idle and unskilful, because they had corporation connexion—such men as these had no chance of being heard against the sharp and unscrupulous lawyers, the pompous aldermen, the rabble of venal voters, and the compact body of town contractors, who clamoured, as for life, for the maintenance of things as they were.—Then, there were the thoughtless and ignorant who loved the city shows—the Mayor's feast, the election processions, the fun and riot of the ward-elections—the antique pageantry of some old towns, with their grim Dragon carried about the streets, and the prancing St. George, and the Whifflers in pink and blue, with their wooden swords—an antique pageantry which wiser people than themselves would be sorry to see no more. And again, there were the anxious Conservatives, and the positive old Tories, who believed that the world would come to an end if long-standing institutions were meddled with. What could the plaints of the sick and the aged and the orphan, and the indignation of the disinterested, and the protest of the excluded, and the appeal of the obscure, do amidst the hubbub of desperate wrongdoers and exasperated haters of change? Hitherto they could do nothing but complain: but now they might hope, and they could speak. In every corporate town sat men sent on purpose to hear all that could be told. Great was the consternation at first; and fiercer grew the threats and clamour, every day, from the highest to the lowest of those who dreaded change. No one can forget what he saw of the action of opposition in any part of that scale.—At the lowest end were the insolent and profligate freemen, who earned bread, and the drink in which they rolled about the streets, by selling their votes, and who would never want a market while the corporate funds remained untouched, and the account books kept secret. These swaggerers swore to put the Duke of Cumberland on the throne if any Ministry dared to look into their resources. At the end of the scale sat he in whom was embodied the rank old Toryism which was only waiting to depart with him from our social life of England. Lord Eldon fitly headed the scale of the angry and the alarmed. "He protested loudly

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in private," we learn from a contemporary sketch of him, "with feverish alarm," against the measure, "as leading directly to confusion. Its interference with vested rights shocked his sense of equity even more than the sweeping clauses of the Reform Act. To set at nought ancient charters as so many bits of decayed parchment, and destroy the archives of town halls, seemed in the eyes of the old magistrate, for so many years the guardian of corporate rights, a crowning iniquity. Pale as a marble statue, and confined to his house in Hamilton Place by infirmity, he would deprecate equally the temerity of Ministers and the madness of the people; and his vaticinations, like the prophet's scroll, were full to overflowing with lamentation and woe. His correspondence, for some years previously, had borne marks of the troubled gloom with which he viewed the changes gradually darkening over all he had loved and venerated, till he felt almost a stranger to the institutions of his native land."

The opposition was incalculable, and might have been supposed unmanageable; yet, so flagrant were the abuses that, at last, it required less than half of one session of Parliament—from June to September—to carry into law a thorough reform of the municipal institutions of England and Wales.

PRINCIPLE OF THE CASE.

The abolition of abuses, flagrant as they might be, was not, however, the most weighty consideration with the advocates of Municipal Reform. They had a higher aim and hope—to train the people to self-government, without which Parliamentary Reform could be little more than a name. A representative system is worse than a despotism for a nation which has no ideas to represent—no clear conception of its political duties, rights, and privileges—no intellect and no conscience in regard to social affairs. The opponents of both Parliamentary and Municipal Reform feared the ignorance and the self-will of the mass of the people; and not without reason; since the corruption of the representation in both departments had caused the ignorance and aggravated the self-will which were now sure to be displayed. The evil was unquestionable: the question was how to deal with it. Either the people must be governed without participation from themselves—that is, England must go back into a despotism; or the people must be educated into a capacity for being governed by themselves, through the principle of representation. The only possible education for political, as for all other moral duty, is by the exercise of the duty itself. It was high time to begin the training anew: and those who most clearly saw the necessity were most thoroughly aware of the imperfections which would immediately appear. They knew that the mass of the municipal electors would show much folly, much ignorance, much selfishness, much anger, in the first exercise of new rights: they knew that much nonsense would be talked in the Town Councils; and that party wrangling would be violent at first; and they no more regarded this as an objection to a reformed system than they looked to schoolboys for the discretion and steady conscientiousness of disciplined men. They knew also that time would do its work, in instructing the raw, and giving the wise and disinterested their natural ascendancy over the violent and the corrupt. They were aware that this measure was of the highest importance to the virtue and the liberties of the nation; the most necessary preparation for all future good; the seed field of hope for the future political life of Great Britain: and they

1835. gave their efforts to the cause accordingly, with a seriousness and energy which they could never have commanded for the mere abolition of abuses of any enormity. The great virtue of the Reform Bill was its extinction of corruption, and its clearing the ground for a true representation. The Municipal Reform Bill had all that merit, and, besides, the greater one of pressing every man's public duty home to him, and engaging him in its exercise, in his own street, and amidst a community where every face was familiar to him. The work was of the highest order; its scope was fully perceived by the Whig Administration; and it was done by them in the most admirable manner that the times and their position admitted. Great as were some of their objects and achievements during the early years of their rule, it is probable that this reform will, in far future centuries, stand out to view above the rest as the highest, from its connexion with the deepest principles of political virtue, and therefore the most lasting system of political liberties.

Defects of the Reform.

The most radical imperfection of the scheme, and that which must subject it to a future reform as sweeping as the last, is its protraction of the severance of the interests of town and country. The Romans, as we have seen, conferred their municipal quality (capacity for civil rights through liability to civil duties) prominently on the inhabitants of towns, where alone institutions of citizenship were established by them during their occupation of Britain. The Saxon system was scarcely cognizant of towns at all: but when the Saxons came to Britain, they found a system existing in the towns to which theirs was easily adapted; and they did not subvert it. During the feudal ages, all civil rights were concentrated in the towns; so that the very word Municipal is to us applicable only to a town system. As civil war subsided, agriculture rose to the point of superseding mere territorial dignity; and before the great rise of manufactures, it was the unquestioned leading interest of the commonalty, while closely connected with the territorial dignity of the aristocracy. With the rise of manufactures, a new political era opened in England. For half a century before the reign of William IV. the manufacturing population had been gaining upon the agricultural, at a perpetually increasing rate; and, if the country gentlemen in Parliament who opposed the Municipal Reform Bill had understood their own case, they would rather have striven for some possible inclusion of the rural population in the scheme than have opposed a reform in the towns. It is an evil all round that the nation should be divided into two populations, the urban and the rural, whose interests are supposed to be antagonistic: and the vehement cries of agricultural distress which had pained the ears of the nation almost without intermission since the Peace, seemed to tell that the agricultural interest was certainly not that which was gaining the ascendancy at present. It would have been a vast benefit to all if the two populations could have been united under a system of local government whose objects are of absolutely universal importance, instead of being separated as peremptorily as ever by the reform of town government, while rural administration remained as before. But neither the Whig Ministers, if they had wished it, nor any others could have effected this in 1835, when the mere mention of such a scheme would have been received as a proposal to subordinate the country to the towns. So the rural population remain in a backward and unfavourable condition—subject

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to the jurisdiction of Justices of the Peace of counties and divisions of counties, while the town population is in the enjoyment of a representative system which, by improving their intelligence and independence, could not but widen the severance between the two populations, to the disadvantage of the rural, if other influences were not operating, at perhaps an equal rate, on behalf of the latter. The extension of Free Trade to agricultural produce, and the consequent improvement of agricultural science and skill which may with certainty be looked for, are likely to raise the mind and the condition of the rural population, till they may become capable of desiring and requiring for themselves a system of local government as favourable as that obtained by the men of the towns: and then, some future government will have to grant to the producers and sellers of food, and the capitalists of their class, the same political scope and privilege which the Bill of 1835 secured to the producers and sellers of all other articles, and the capitalists of their multifarious class.

The other great imperfection of the measure was one, only temporary in its character, but of pernicious operation during the critical years when the citizens required every aid, and no hindrance, in learning to discharge their new duties and exercise their new rights:—the privileges of the old freemen were preserved, and with them a large measure of corruption. This was not the work of the Administration, but an amendment insisted on by the Lords. The preservation of the parliamentary franchise and corporation property of this depraved body has been the greatest impediment to the purifying operation of the measure: but care was taken by the Ministers and the House of Commons that, while existing property and privilege of an objectionable character were tenderly dealt with, no new interests of a similar kind should be permitted to arise: and thus, beneficial as have been the effects of corporate reform from the day that the Bill became law, its best results have yet to be realized.

Political Dictionary, ii. 385—392.

Substance of the Bill.

The substance of the measure, as passed, is this.

The points for review are four—the Area in the State occupied by the system—the Objects of Municipal Government—the Municipal Constituency—the Municipal Functionaries.

The number of boroughs included under the Bill was 178, and the collective population about 2,000,000, at that time. Of these boroughs 128 of the most important had a commission of the peace assigned to them; while the other 50 might obtain such a commission on a representation to the Crown, by the Town Council, that the borough needs the appointment of one or more salaried police magistrates.—London is not included under the Act, a special measure being promised for the metropolis: towards which, however, nothing has yet been done. Of the 178 boroughs, 93 were parliamentary boroughs, and their limits were taken as settled by the Reform Bill. The boundaries of the remaining 85 stood as they were before, until parliament should direct an alteration.—Each borough was divided into electoral wards—Liverpool into 16; others into 12, 10, or fewer, till the smallest were reached, which needed no division at all. The boundaries of the wards, and the number of Town Councillors to be returned by each, were settled after the passing of the Act, by barristers appointed for the purpose.

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Hansard, xx. 905.

The Objects of Municipal Government were briefly set forth in the King's speech at the close of the session of 1833, in the sentence which recommends parliament "to mature some measures which may seem best fitted to place the internal government of corporate cities and towns upon a solid foundation, in respect to their finances, their judicature, and their police."—The new Act left the old objects untouched, for the most part, except in regard to the administration of justice and of charity trusts. The administration of charity trust funds was now placed in the hands of trustees appointed by the Lord Chancellor; and justice was made more accessible, and its functionaries more responsible, by various new provisions. As to the appointment and management of the constabulary, the paving and lighting of the towns, and other duties of the local government, they were not dictated, nor local Acts interfered with, by express enactment. The thing to be done was to procure a practical amendment by giving a true constituency to the towns, by which the local authorities should be elected in a genuine manner.

Hitherto, the functionaries made the constituency; and the constituency in return appointed the functionaries: so that if a sufficient number of corrupt and indolent men could be got into league, they could do what they pleased with the powers and the funds of the boroughs. This was now amended. The first class considered was that of the existing freemen, whose privilege, having been hitherto much restricted, was supposed to have been valuable, and of proportionate original cost. It was therefore preserved to them, their wives and widows, sons, daughters, and apprentices, who were to enjoy the same privileges in land and property, shares in common lands and public stock of the borough or corporation as if the new Act had never been passed: but henceforward, the debts of the corporation were to be paid before, and not after as hitherto, the claims of such persons were satisfied. The parliamentary franchise was also, as we have said, preserved to the old freemen. But the way to further abuse was stopped, not only by creating an honest constituency which should swamp the corrupt old one, but by a provision that no rights of borough freedom should henceforth be acquired by gift or purchase, or in any other modes than those now enacted.—The Act prescribes a property qualification, on the understood ground that the municipal funds are provided by the propertied classes, who ought therefore to have the disposal of them. The condition of a three years' residence was much objected to, by men here and there of all parties: but it was believed to be necessary to obviate sudden and large creations of voters for party purposes—an evil of which government had had recent and inconvenient experience, the admissions of freemen in certain towns in England having been six times as many in 1830 as in the preceding year. If a necessity, however, the restriction is a bad necessity; and it will probably be repealed when the purification of municipal government has become assured.—To be a municipal constituent, a man must be of full age; must, on the last day of the preceding August, have occupied premises within the borough continuously for the three previous years; must have been for those three years an inhabitant householder within seven miles of the borough; and must have been rated to the poor, and have paid those and all borough rates during the same three years.—Such was the constituency ordained by the new

1835. Act—a narrow one; but good as far as it goes, and understood to be so restricted on account of previous abuses.

The Registration of the constituency was to be managed by an organization resembling that under the Reform Bill, with the variations rendered necessary by difference of circumstances. The overseers of parishes make the lists: the Town Clerk corrects and publishes them; and, since the first year, the Mayor and the Assessors appointed for the purpose have revised them.

The Functionaries of Town Corporations and their constituents had hitherto borne a strange variety of titles in different places. Henceforth they were every where to be called "the Mayor, Aldermen, and Burgesses." This body was henceforth a constituted Corporation; empowered to do all legal acts as a body, and not as individuals; to sue and be sued by the corporate name; and to transmit their corporate rights to their corporate successors. The Town Council is the great ruling body of the borough. The wards elect the Councillors, whose number was, as has been said, apportioned after the passing of the Act by barristers who visited the boroughs for the purpose. The Council administers, by its Committees, all the local business—the constabulary appointments, and the paving and lighting; and the body in conclave appoint their own officers: decree the expenditure of the borough fund, and the leasing of land and buildings; and they have the power of making bye-laws for the prevention and suppression of nuisances, and other objects of minor legislation. All needful safeguards against corruption are provided by making committees responsible to the whole Council, by the appointment of auditors of accounts who shall not themselves be councillors at the time; and by the regulations that all town accounts shall be published; that two-thirds of the Council shall be present at the passing of any bye-law, and that forty days shall be allowed to the Secretary of State to object to such bye-law, and procure its disallowance by the sovereign.—A property qualification for the office of councillor is requisite. One-third of the Council go out, and are supplied by annual election on the 1st of November.

The Mayor is chosen from among the councillors: and he must serve, or pay a fine of 100*l.* He presides over the public acts of the borough during his year of office; is for that time and the next year a Justice of the Peace; revises the registration with the assessors, and sanctions the lists by his signature in open court; and is made Returning Officer on occasion of election to parliament.

The function of Alderman is somewhat anomalous under the new Act, into which it was introduced by the Lords, more, as it appears, from a clinging to old names and forms than from any clear idea of what there was for aldermen to do. By their remaining in office six years, and half going out every three years, while their body includes one-third of the whole Council, the regulation for replenishing the Council by new members to the number of one-third annually is set aside. They are little more than councillors having precedence of others and being removeable at the end of six years instead of three.

The Town Clerk and Treasurer are appointed by the Council. The first has to keep in safety the charter deeds and records of the borough; to make out the registration lists; keep the Minutes of the Council, and be subject to their direction. The treasurer is responsible for his accounts to the auditors,

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to whom he is to submit them half-yearly.—The Auditors are annually elected by the burgesses, on the 1st of March. The Assessors are elected in like manner.

The power was reserved to the Crown of appointing such Justices of the Peace as government may think proper: also such salaried Police Magistrates as the borough may apply for; and again, a Recorder for a single borough, or for two or more in conjunction, provided the councillors of such town or towns desire to have a Recorder, show cause for such an appointment, and prove that they can pay his salary. Boroughs having a Recorder have separate Courts of Quarter Sessions of the Peace, such Courts being coequal in powers with similar Courts for counties.

All Church property in the hands of the old Corporations was required to be sold under the direction of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners; the proceeds to be invested in government securities, and the annual interest to form a part of the Borough fund. Towns not at that time incorporated, might obtain a charter of incorporation by petition to the Privy Council. Some of the largest towns in England obtained charters by this method within a few years after the passing of the Act.

The Bill in the Commons.

In the Lords.

Corporation Commissioners' Report.

It becomes Law.

It was on the 5th of June that Lord John Russell introduced the Municipal Reform Bill to the House of Commons. By the cordial union of the Whig and Radical parties, it was passed rapidly and safely through the Lower House. The difficulty was with the Peers, who carried one amendment after another against Ministers; and among others, a decision to hear counsel for the existing Corporations, which delayed the progress of the measure for some time. The opposition was, as might be expected, about the rights of property—the property of poor men, it was insisted, and therefore to be the more carefully regarded; and about the overthrow of ancient practices and observances. But the case was too bad for a destructive opposition. As for the rights of property of the poor—in the city of Norwich, there were 3,225 resident freemen, of whom 315 were paupers; 808 more were not rated. In Lincoln, nearly four-fifths of the population were excluded from the Corporation; and of the corporate body, three-fourths paid no rates. At Cambridge, out of 20,000 inhabitants, there were only 118 freemen. At Ipswich, of 2,000 ratepayers, only 187 belonged to the Corporation. In the face of these facts, it was a mockery to talk of the rights of property being disregarded by the Bill.—As to the ancient practices and observances, it was only necessary to look back into history to see that the existing state of things was in fact a mass of modern innovation and corruption, and that the Bill was a restoration of ancient rights—a recurrence to the true old municipal principle. From a conviction that the fact was so, and that the true old principle would, in a generation or two, work itself clear of the mischief of the Lords' amendments, the Ministers, after due consideration, adopted those amendments rather than lose the measure. So they preserved the existing race of poor freemen, who must die out in a few years; let in the anomalous aldermen, in the hope that their uselessness and the evil of breaking in on the rotation of the Town Councillors would be ascertained before long; yielded some points in regard to qualification, and induced the Lords to yield some of their points; and finally passed the Bill on the 7th of September. On the 9th, it became law.

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The passage of the Bill was a severe and unexpected blow to the high Tory party, who had confidently reckoned on its being rejected by the Commons when returned from the Upper House. After all that they had done, they found that their staff of magistracy was swept away, to be succeeded by responsible officials returned by a genuine principle of election. The corrupt office-holders under the old system saw with dismay that the Church and Charity Funds which had given them so much power and profit were now to be publicly administered for the general good, and that borough property would be henceforth the property of the borough, and the police the servants of the public and not theirs. As Colonel Sibthorp expressed it, these exclusive privileges were gone "at one fell swoop:"—as O'Connell expressed it, "tag rag and bobtail was swept away."—The rejoicing among the honest and enlightened townsmen of the kingdom was naturally great. Yet, perhaps, there were few, even of the most joyous, who did not feel more or less regret at some of the adjuncts of the change; at the extinction, for instance, of antique municipal observances and shows. It was a great thing to see ancient charities renovated—schools and asylums rising again, and coffers filling with money restored to the purposes of the needy. It was a great thing to see our country planted over with little republics where the citizens would henceforth be trained to political thought and public virtue: but it seemed a pity that the city feasts must go—the processions be seen no more—the gorgeous dresses be laid by—the banners be folded up—the dragon be shelved, and St. George never allowed to wear his armour again; and the gay runners, in their pink and blue jerkins, their peaked shoes and rosettes, and their fearful wooden swords, turned into mere weavers, tinmen, and shoemakers. Already, some of us may find ourselves discoursing eagerly to children, as Englishmen used to do to wondering Americans, of the sights we once saw on great corporation days: and when we are dead, a future generation may turn over the municipal wardrobes, before their colours are faded, and cast a glance over the Mayors' bills of fare, and ask whether such things could have belonged to common life in the 19th century. These things, from being once solemn and significant, may have become child's play, of which we of the 19th century ought to have been ashamed: yet there are perhaps few of us that were not sorry to see them go. For once, Lord Eldon was not without general sympathy.

CHAPTER IV.

1835.

Ecclesiastical Commissions.

AMIDST the existing state of feeling with regard to the Church, its wealth and its inefficiency for the religious instruction and guidance of the people, it was impossible for any government to feel or assume indifference to its condition. We find, therefore, both the Administrations of 1835 issuing an Ecclesiastical Commission, for the purpose of inquiring into and reporting upon the changes which might be effected in regard to Church territory, income, and patronage, so as to render remuneration and labour more commensurate with each other, to enforce residence, and destroy the necessity of pluralities, by providing for all a sufficient revenue. Both Commissions—the one issued by Sir R. Peel in February, and the other by Lord Melbourne in June—were publicly objected to by parties within the Church, ranging from Dr. Pusey to Sydney Smith; while those outside the Church, constituting nearly half the population between the Land's End and Johnny Groat's, regarded the matter with no great interest, because with little hope. Dr. Pusey and his High Church party denied the right of the government to meddle with the distribution of Church offices and funds; and Sydney Smith, in a series of published letters, complained of the Commission being composed chiefly of the high dignitaries of the Church, whose judgment might, he thought, have been beneficially aided by information and suggestion from a lower order of clergy, more conversant with the minds and the needs of the people. Those outside the pale of the Establishment, knowing that the appropriation principle was not to be named, expected little from a mere redistribution of office and funds, made by the highest holders of office and income: and to the people at large, the most interesting part of the whole matter was the conspicuous fact that the Church was at last compelled to undertake its own reform—or what its dignitaries conceived to be so. Startling evidences of popular ignorance and the blindest fanaticism were forcing themselves on universal attention, just at the time when the publication of the revenues of the Church was prompting the question how it was possible that an establishment so rich in men and money could exist beside a population in a state of such heathen blindness.—The Ecclesiastical Commission of 1831 had declared the gross revenues of the Established Church in England and Wales to amount to 3,792,885*l.*; and the net revenue to 3,490,497*l.* During the ensuing years of inquiry and legislation, men did not forget that the net revenue of the English Church amounted to three millions and a half; and while they were waiting to see how these funds would be dealt with, events were continually occurring to show what ought to be done with them.

Political Dictionary, i. p. 853.

Popular Ignorance.

Without going over again the sickening record, found in the register of almost every year, of ignorance and fanaticism shown in disturbances requiring repression by soldiery and punishment by the law, we may refer to one event which seemed to occur, as was said in parliament, for the shaming of the Church. We find too much besides—we find a rector of Lockington tithing the wages of a poor labourer, named Dodsworth, and throwing him into jail for the sum of four shillings and fourpence. We find Church rate riots abounding—the pannelling of pews broken in, and men exchanging blows in the Church with fists and cudgels. We find revivals of religion taking place here and there—scenes worthy only of a frantic heathenism—scenes of raving, of blasphemous prayer, of panic-struck egotism, followed by burial processions to lay in the ground the victims of apoplexy or nervous exhaustion.—We find men selling their wives in the market-places, with halters round their necks—none of the parties having the remotest conception of what marriage is in the eye of the law or of the Christian religion.—We find crowds in such a place as Sheffield gutting, and repeatedly firing, the Medical School, through the old prejudices against dissection.—But all these incidents, and many others of like nature with them, wrought less on the public mind to the shame of the Church than an event which happened in 1838 almost under the shadow of Canterbury Cathedral. That in such a neighbourhood, a large body of the common people should believe a lunatic to be the Messiah, and follow him to death through such a series of observances as only a lunatic could have imposed, was a shock to the clergy, it was believed, and was certainly a subject of painful amazement to the rest of the world, which was not at all solicitous to keep its opinion to itself. From the House of Commons to the wayside inn, men were asking what the Church was for, and what the clergy could be about, if the population of a district near Canterbury could worship the wounds in the hands and side of a raving lunatic; see him fire a pistol at a star, and bring it down; believe him invulnerable, and themselves through him; expect to see him sail away, as he declared he came, on clouds of glory through the heavens; and, when he was shot dead, be quite happy in the certainty that he would rise again in a month.

Courtenay Delusion.

This poor wretch, named Thom, had been confined in a lunatic asylum for four years, and was then delivered over to his friends on the supposition of his being harmless. He then called himself Sir William Courtenay, fancying himself a man of high family, as well as large estates,—in the same breath claiming to be the Messiah, and threatening hell-fire against all who would not follow him to obtain his estates, and get rich themselves. He did not want for followers; for, as the people said about his knowledge of the Scriptures, "no un*lar*ned person could stand before Sir William." He fired a pistol against himself, and was not wounded—there being no bullet. He put a lighted lucifer match under a bean stack which did not burn: and these things were regarded as true miracles by his followers. They believed that nothing could hurt them while following him; and when a mother could not refuse to recognise the wounds of her son, she comforted herself that he was "fighting for his Saviour." They kissed the madman's feet, and worshipped him. A woman followed him on the last day of his life, wherever he went, with a pail of water, because he had said that if he died, and if she put water between his lips, he would rise again in a month. He administered the Sacrament to his followers in bread and water. As he lay dead, his blouse was torn up, that his followers

Spectator, 1835, p. 530.

1835. might carry away the shreds as relics. The strongest rebuke to the Church, however, was at the funeral. From the fear of attack, and rescue of the body, there was a race to the churchyard—a trial of speed between the funeral van and the attendant gigs and carts: but, far worse, the clergyman felt it necessary to omit those parts of the burial service which relate to the resurrection of the dead. Many stolid and miserable wretches were watching the interment from the railing—some ghastly from wounds received in the fight: and the clergyman feared that any promise of a resurrection would make them watch for the return of their prophet, to reign in the Powderham estates, float in the clouds, and give to each of his true followers a farm of forty acres. It was long before the clergy of Canterbury heard the last of this.—In the affair of this madman and his pretensions, ten lives were lost in a few moments, and many persons were wounded. The party of fanatics had strolled about the country for four days, praying, obtaining recruits, and looking for the Millenium. A farmer, whose men had been seduced from their work, gave information to the police. The first constable who presented himself was shot, by Thom himself, who then took his sword, and hacked the body, crying out, "Now am I not your Saviour?" A party of military was brought from Canterbury, whose officer, Lieut. Bennett, was deliberately shot dead by the same hand. The lunatic himself was the next to fall, crying with his last breath, "I have Jesus in my heart." The local jails were filled with his followers, who were too ignorant to wonder at what they had done, even after the discovery that their leader and companions could be wounded and die. Some were transported for life, or for terms, and the rest imprisoned for different periods. They were now at last brought, under such circumstances as these, under the care of the Church, by which they should have been instructed and guided from their youth up; and at the end of a year's imprisonment some of them signed a paper declaratory of their shame and sorrow at their impious delusion, and at the acts to which it had led them. Some who could not sign their names, declared the same thing among their old neighbours. Very few of the band could read and write.

Annual Register, 1839, Chron. 134.

It was not likely that such evils as were indicated by this event would be reached by a commission of church dignitaries inquiring into property and income, and unpractised in dealing with the popular mind: but, small as was the expectation of all parties, the result in eight years disappointed even that. The number of benefices and churches whose incomes had been augmented by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners for England was, in that time, 469; and the augmentation amounted, in the whole, to the sum of £25,779. The Church would certainly not save the people or itself in this way: and it was well that other measures were attempted.

Polit. Dict. i. 802.

Results of the Commission.

The Ecclesiastical Commissioners were incorporated by Act of Parliament in 1836, their number then consisting of thirteen, and including several members of the government. One of their first operations was a re-arrangement of episcopal sees. Two new sees — those of Ripon and Manchester — were created; and four of the old ones were consolidated into two—Gloucester being united to Bristol, and St. Asaph to Bangor.—After this, the chief work of the Commissioners was making the re-distribution, whose result, after eight years, has been mentioned. It was felt by most reasonable people that the less they expected the better, after hearing that the Commissioners did not find that any process of re-distribution could render the income of the bishoprics sufficient for the wants of the bishops—the number of bishops being twenty-six, and the amount of income nearly £150,000 per annum. Church reformers who made such a declaration as this were not the kind of reformers who would secure the peasantry of England against seduction by future maniacs and blasphemers. Something more than this must be done.

Polit. Dict. i. 385.

NON-RESIDENCE ACT.

In 1838, an Act passed, the object of which was to correct the abuse of non-residence—to render it impossible henceforth for the beneficed clergyman to be absent, at his own pleasure, from the field of his duties, while enjoying the proceeds of his living. If absent for between three months and six, for other than professional purposes, without a license, he must forfeit a third of the income from his benefice; if between six and eight months, half the income: if twelve months, three-fourths of the income. These requisitions were not new: but they were to be fenced about with strong securities. Before granting the license, the bishop must be satisfied that the intended absentee has provided a proper substitute, duly salaried. Other regulations came in with this—methods by which the bishop can keep himself informed of the condition of the parishes under the care of his clergy, and not only check the tempting practice of non-residence, but form some idea of the state of the relation between the pastors and their flocks. This was a great improvement, not only as securing to the flocks the presence of their pastors, but as discouraging the entrance into the service of the Church of men who have no taste for its duties, but come in merely for a maintenance. The condition of residence is as terrible or disgusting to such a class of clergy as it is welcome to those who are worthy of their function. Great as this improvement was, much more was wanted: and two years after, another considerable step was taken.

Polit. Dict. i. 801.

ABOLITION OF SINECURES, &c.

In 1840, an Act was passed which made a great sweep of abuses, and applied the accruing funds to good purposes. It abolished many ecclesiastical sinecures, or deprived the holders of their emoluments; it abolished the old self-elected deans and chapters, decreeing that deans should be appointed by the Crown, and canons by the bishops;—it authorized the purchase and suppression of sinecure rectories in private patronage, and the devotion of the proceeds to the spiritual wants of the people at hand or elsewhere. All the profits arising from these proceedings were to form a fund at the disposal of the Commissioners for the supply of the most pressing spiritual needs which came to their knowledge. There was a good deal of outcry, from the clergy as well as others, about granting such powers as this bill conveyed to such a body of functionaries—placed so high above the level of popular feeling—as constituted the Ecclesiastical Commission. Pages might be filled with the remonstrances, serious and jocose, of Sydney Smith upon the occasion; and there was much truth in the objections which he made: but it was so great a thing to get rid of so much scandal, to sweep away so much abuse, and administer a stern rebuke to the sinecurists of the Church and their patrons, that the Act was, on the whole, regarded as the most considerable advance yet made by the Commission towards a reform of the Church. As far as it went, it was a clearing of the ground. But this, after all, was a small matter; and more must be done.

Tithe Commutation Act.

The Tithe Commutation Act, for England and Wales, which passed in 1837, was a great promoter of peace and good-will between the Church and the people at large. From year to year, the irritation on both sides on the subject of tithes had become more and more intolerable; and, as we have seen, in one place a peasant was shooting his rector, and in another, a rector was tithing the peasant's wages, and throwing him into jail for the sum of 4*s.* 4*d.* Such things have not been heard of since; for the admirable measure of 1837 has put an end to the quarrelling which was discreditable enough to the nation, and perfectly scandalous in connexion with the Church. Tithe, not being a tax paid to government, nor to any institution, but to almost as many lay as clerical individuals, could not be swept away, or repealed like an ordinary tax. It had become so mixed up with a mass of interests and affairs, that its abolition could not have been effected but by a confiscation which would have put the gain into the pockets of men who had no business with it.—The true method was to convert tithe into a rent-charge: and this was done in a very effective manner. The charge, payable in money, was determined by the average price of corn for the seven preceding years; and all kinds of tithe were to come under this arrangement. Every facility was given for a voluntary agreement between the tithe-owner and payer; and both were, in a large number of cases, glad to settle their disputes upon this basis: but if, after the lapse of a sufficient time, no such agreement was made, the Tithe Commissioners had power to enforce it. In eight years from the passing of the Act, about half the business of assigning and apportioning rent-charges throughout the kingdom was completed: and a very large proportion of the agreements was voluntary.—Provision was made for a redemption of the tithe-charge, where desired, the payer being authorized to make over land to the owner, not exceeding twenty acres in one parish, in purchase of his release from tithe-charges for ever. This power of redemption, though good, was less valuable than it would have been thought at an earlier date. Formerly, men would have sacrificed much to free themselves from the perplexing and galling uncertainty of tithe-charges, which prevented them from undertaking improvements, or deprived them of all the profit. But now the uncertainty and malicious incidence of the tax were removed by its conversion into a rent-charge, on a broad and ascertainable basis. Here, again, was a great clearing of the ground for improvement of the relation between the Church and the people. But it was not enough. The worst evils remained; and there were some at the time who expressed their sense of these evils in the words of Milton, which tell how the poor "sit at the foot of a pulpited divine to as little purpose of benefiting as the sheep in their pens at Smithfield."

Polit. Dict. ii. 812.

Popular Education.

The desideratum was a system of Education. Every body knew this. That is, every body knew that the great mass of the working classes, and all the vast pauper class of England, were deplorably ignorant. But who could say what was to be done, while the Church did not educate its own body, and yet rose up in opposition at every mention of a plan which did not give the control and administration of education to the clergy, and the Dissenters could not possibly agree to any such condition? The Dissenters exerted themselves much more than the Church to educate the children within their respective bodies; but, besides that the instruction they could give was desultory, partial,

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and superficial, those bodies did not comprehend the most ignorant and destitute classes—the very poor agricultural labourers and the abandoned of the towns, who belonged to no religious denomination at all. The majority of all denominations objected to secular education; and on any system of religious instruction they could not agree. In various parts of the Continent the spectacle might be seen of children sitting on the same bench, Catholics, Protestants, and Jews, having their understandings opened, their consciences awakened, and their affections flowing out upon one another, with a prospect before them of co-operation in their future lives—the duties of citizenship rendered easy by associations of school days, and purged from the sectarian taint that renders English society an aggregate of bodies which distrust and dislike each other through prejudices sent down from generation to generation. But among us such a spectacle could not be hoped for; for no subject is less understood by our nation at large than that of religious liberty. Religious liberty could not become understood but by improved general education: and general education could not be had for want of religious liberty. It was truly a desperate case. We have seen how fruitlessly efforts had been made, by Mr. Brougham and others, to extinguish this fatality: and while such efforts resulted only in increased positiveness and bitterness on every hand, thousands and tens of thousands of children had been passing off into a condition of hopeless ignorance and depravity, amidst which the most erroneous views of the Christian religion would have been as the day-spring from on high to those who sit in darkness. Combined with what else they would have learned, there were no views of Christianity which could have been imparted in England that would not have been salvation to the host of children in the Durham coal-pits, and the wilds of Wales, and the hovels of Dorsetshire, and the cellars of Liverpool, and the precincts of Canterbury, and the rookeries of London, who have sunk, the while, into abysses of guilt and misery through the neglect of the State of which they were the helpless and unconscious members. The high honour of being the first to lay a hand on the barrier of exclusion belongs to the Whig administrations of this period. It was little that they could do: and that little could not expand into an effective system. From the nature of the case, their plan could be but of temporary duration, as well as most restricted operation: for they could only help those who could, more or less, help themselves; whereas the aid was needed especially by those who were unconscious of their own need: but, if they could drive in only a little wedge which must be thrown away, it was they who found the crevice, and struck the first blow.

It was the fashion of the time to laugh at the Whig administrations for their resort to special commissions: a resort, however, for which the country is much indebted to them. That they did not employ this method in the early days of their rule, as a preparation for an educational system, while they used it with eminent success in their Poor Law and Municipal reforms, is an indication of their hopelessness about establishing a system at all. Without a full and protracted inquiry, the results of which should be offered in a comprehensive Report, no measure could be framed which had a chance of working well. The question of endowments was under investigation; and nothing could be proposed about funds till the results of that inquiry were known. The actual state of education was not ascertained; nor had the legislature any definite

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notions as to the kind and degree of education which should be desired or attempted for the people at large. It was a rare thing to meet with an English gentleman, in or out of parliament, who had any clear views on the question of state or voluntary education;—which was best for us in itself—which was most procurable for us—and whether they should, could, or might be in any degree united. Such a "Whig Commission" as it was the fashion of the day to laugh at would have brought knowledge to legislators, and made them think and discuss, till their minds had attained some clearness. The public attention would have been fixed, and its interest roused, by the same means; and in a few years—perhaps two or three—the matter would have been ripe for legislation. But it was clear that Ministers dared not employ this method. Parliament, being yet blind to the importance of the project, would have complained of the expense; the Church would have risen up to oppose an invasion of what she considered her province: and the Dissenters would, as we see by the light of a later time, have attacked with fury any proposal to modify their operations among the young of their own sects. So, nothing was said about any broad plan of an extensive commission, with a view to future legislation; and Ministers and parliament could learn only from such information as came in through the Factory Inspectors, the Charity and Poor Law Commissioners, and the witnesses who gave testimony before an Education Committee of the House of Commons in 1834-5.

Lord Brougham's Scheme, 1837.

Lord Brougham ventured to proceed upon the partial and most imperfect information thus obtained, to form and propose to parliament a scheme of National Education in the session of 1837: and the result was what might have been anticipated—a plan too crude for adoption. His plan would have placed the school system under the control of the Administration of the day, while leaving it subject to the worst evils of voluntaryism; and thus it could never have commanded general confidence, while it left unsolved the sectarian difficulties which have been the chief embarrassment throughout. There were yet other objections, so evident to those who knew most on the subject of which all knew but too little, that the measure, introduced in two succeeding years, was dropped without a contest.—What the Ministers did was very modest in comparison with this; and, modest as their effort was, it cost them so much trouble and opposition, that no one will venture to say they could have done more.

Ministerial Scheme, 1834.

As we have seen, a Committee of the Commons sat during two sessions, to receive and report upon evidence as to the condition of Education. This is a subject quite unmanageable by a Parliamentary Committee, by its vastness, and the impossibility of securing an average—a true representation—of witnesses. The Committee therefore was of little use, except as an evidence that the great subject of Education was becoming really interesting to the legislature. In 1834, the government obtained from Parliament the first grant in aid of Education. It was only 20,000*l.*: but it was a beginning: and it went on through subsequent years till 1839, when a vote of 30,000*l.* was asked for.—The grant was distributed in different proportions through the National School Association, which was in strict connexion with the Church of England, and the British and Foreign School Society, which admitted children of all Christian denominations, without imposing upon them sectarian teaching. The method of distribution was by giving aid to applicants in proportion to the amounts which those applicants could prove themselves able to raise for the building of school houses. It is obvious at a glance that on this principle aid is given precisely where it is least wanted—to districts which can raise funds for educational purposes, while the poorest and most neglected could proffer no claim. After a few years, the Educational Committee of the Privy Council resolved that the principle of giving most where most could be raised on the spot should not be invariably adhered to, if applications should be made from very poor and populous districts, where subscriptions could not be obtained to a sufficient amount. As to the desolate districts where there was no one to stir at all amidst the deadness of ignorance and poverty—there was no provision made for them.—To those that had much, more was to be given; and to those that had less, was less to be given: and to those who had nothing—nothing. One beneficent work which the annual parliamentary grant (still annually disputed, however, and therefore uncertain) enabled the Ministers to effect, was the establishment and organization of a model school, from which might descend long generations of schools for the training of teachers. In 1835, 10,000*l.* was expressly voted by Parliament for this object; and in 1839, the Committee of Privy Council expressed their regret that, owing to the sectarian difficulties of the case, they could not propose a plan for the establishment of a Normal school under the care of the State, instead of that of a voluntary association. Minute, June 3rd, 1839.

Opposition was made at every step. Lord Stanley even declared in 1839, that the grant of 10,000*l.* for a Normal school, in 1835, was made at a late period of the session, when Members were not duly vigilant. When, in 1839, an Order in Council vested the management of the Education fund in a Committee of Privy Council, instead of the Lords of the Treasury, in whose hands it had hitherto been, the sharpest debate, and that which most clearly revealed the difficulties of the case, took place in both Houses, and led to a severe retort from the government. On Lord John Russell moving for the grant, Lord Stanley moved an amendment proposing an address to the Sovereign to rescind the Order in Council for the appointment of the Board of Privy Council. Hansard, xlviii. 229. A debate which was renewed at intervals for some weeks brought out the views of a variety of members on the whole Education question; and the reader sees, with a sort of amazement, that a member here and there set himself to prove that in France there was least crime where ignorance was most dense, and desired the House to infer that the innocence of the masses was in proportion to their inability to read and write. In the Commons, the Ministers obtained their grant by a majority of only two: and in the Lords, an Address to the Sovereign, like that proposed by Lord Stanley, moved by the Archbishop of Canterbury, was carried by a majority of 111. The Lords carried up the Address, sincerely believing, no doubt, that they were rescuing their young Queen and the State from the guilt and danger of countenancing dissent by permitting any portion of the parliamentary grants to reach the schools of the British and Foreign Society through the hands of members of the Privy Council. But they received their rebuke from the clear voice of their young Queen, who saw, under the guidance of her Ministers, the full enormity of the claim of the Church to engross the education of the nation. Hansard, xlviii. 1332.

1835. There was nothing in the present condition of the people—about Canterbury, for instance, as people were saying—or of the National schools, to induce a belief that the Church was fulfilling well the function which it claimed: but if it had—if the education in those schools had been as good as it then was proved to be bad, and if the Church had been really educating all who did not expressly belong to dissenting bodies, the claim of the Church—that the government should not countenance and aid the efforts of Dissenters, by sending help through the hands of the Privy Council Committee, was too monstrous not to be rebuked as it was by the royal reply. Annual Register, 1839, p. 171. The Queen was sensible of their Lordships' zeal for religion and the Church; was always happy to have their advice; yet thought it a matter of regret that they should have thought it necessary to offer it now:—was deeply aware of her duties to the Church, in sanctioning the very measure in question—reminded their Lordships that by annual Reports they would always know what was done by the Committee, and have opportunity for objection or control; and finally, hoped that it would appear that the grants had been expended with strict fidelity to the purposes of Parliament, to the rights of conscience, and the security of the Established Church.

The clergy, with few exceptions, henceforth refused to permit participation in these grants; and the quarrel between the Church and the government, in regard to the principles of administration of the grants for education, has been revived, from time to time, and is not settled at this day.—One good result of the proceedings of the session of 1839 was that a strong effort was made to extend, and also to improve, the National Schools. The Church party wished to test and bring out the strength of its own body; and also to compensate the clergy who had conscientiously refused participation in the government grants. The chief solace to the observer of these melancholy contentions of bigotry with the needs of the time was in seeing how the Church became roused to some sense of her duty towards the ignorant and the poor, and how the great subject of popular education was at last making its way to the front on the platform of public interests. The struggle with which each step was attended showed, in a stronger light than any one had anticipated, the utter blindness of a large number of educated Protestants, in or outside of the British parliament, to the rights of the universal human mind and conscience—of the mind to knowledge, and of the conscience to equal liberty: but the more this blindness was exhibited, the less mischief there was in it, and the more likely were the friends of popular enlightenment to understand and agree how to proceed.

Among these friends of popular enlightenment must certainly be considered the Melbourne administration and that which succeeded it. The Whig Ministers made the beginning which has been detailed: and their successors carried out their plan with a zeal and fidelity for which they merited and obtained high honour.—By this scheme, the Church was offered the opportunity which she seemed to need for regaining some of the honour she had lost, and retrieving some of the disgrace under which she lay at this particular period: but she could not accept the opportunity; and, while torn more fiercely every year by the conflicts of parties within her own pale—her very bishops being by this time arrayed against each other as favourers or repressors of "Tractarianism"—she was dissolving the traditional associations of respect and awe in the minds

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of the nation at large by her practical opposition to popular enlightenment. Such reforms, however, as she permitted in the working of her own affairs were already operating for good; and it is the recorded opinion of some of her highest dignitaries that the preservation of the very existence of the Church of England is owing to the Melbourne administration. Those who may not agree in such an opinion yet, may and do now see that that administration was really most friendly to the Church precisely in insisting on those measures which the Church most vehemently opposed. If, for one instant, they had yielded to the control of the Church the parliamentary grant for education, they would have done as much for her speedy destruction, as they could have done for her stability and prosperity if they had been able to carry their Appropriation principle.

CHAPTER V.

1835. TO the contemplative philosopher, nothing is more striking, throughout the whole range of human life, than the universal tendency of men to overrate the relative importance of the business under their hand. It would be unreasonable to quarrel with this tendency—evidence though it be of human fallibility and blindness:—it would be unreasonable to quarrel with it, while human faculties are what they are—able to work but slowly, and within a very limited range: because the stimulus of hope and confidence is necessary to impel men to do all that they can; whereas, they would sink down in the inaction of discouragement if they could see at the moment the actual proportion that their deeds bear to their needs. Children would never learn to read first, and then would never learn the grammar of a new language, if they were aware beforehand what a language is, and what a work it is to master its structure and its signs: it is by seeing only the page before them, by not looking beyond the task of the hour, that they accomplish the business at last: and it is not till they have become men that they apprehend the philosophy of their achievement, and learn to be grateful that they did not recognise it sooner. Thus it is in the great sphere of politics, where the wisest men are but children, working their way to achievement with more or less of the confidence of simplicity; a simplicity which the ordinary life of man is too short to convert into a power of philosophical retrospect. In the longer life of a nation, this power of philosophical retrospect belongs to a future generation; and it is very interesting to the thoughtful of each generation to contemplate the confident satisfaction of their forefathers in the belief that they had set things straight as they went, and compassed the whole of the business which was under their hand. How complete did the Reformation appear to those who wrought it! How confident were they that Romanism was subordinated to Protestantism for ever! whereas, our own time has taught us that the work was not only incomplete, but certainly insecure, and possibly transient. How complete did the Revolution of 1688 appear to those who wrought and witnessed it! How confident were they that good principles of government were firmly established by it! Yet we see how not only those principles might be evaded, but how the most important part of the work, the government of the towns, was left in a state of corruption as dire as all the Stuarts had made it. How complete did the work of Catholic Emancipation appear to those who emancipated the Catholics; and how confidently did they, and their supporters of the liberal party, conclude that the tranquillization of Ireland was achieved! Yet the mere use of the terms "tranquillization of Ireland" now appears a mockery. To a future generation, the most astonishing part of the whole business will be that the men of 1829 could be such children as thus to overrate the importance of a single act—great as the act might be.—Again, how confident were the Whigs

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of 1832 of the finality of the Reform measure; and those who were less childish than this were themselves as childish in supposing that the nation was settled and satisfied for a time; safe at least from revolution; and that further reforms might proceed with regularity, in the midst of security. In a spirit of security, the intelligence of the kingdom prosecuted its work—the government achieving political and social reforms—the Church carrying on ecclesiastical reforms; and the liberal parties, in and out of parliament, proposing and maturing schemes for the orderly and regular removal of abuses and obstructions, as if the deposits of the corruptions and miseries of centuries were not still present in their midst, working towards explosions which might shatter our polity to fragments in a day. Already we begin to see—what will be seen much more clearly a hundred years hence—that those who lived in the years succeeding 1832 were living in times perhaps as perilous as the history of England has to show—amidst a romance of peril as striking, when fully understood, as any of the times of the Plantagenets and the Stuarts. If this statement appears extravagant, it must be because the greater number of quiet Englishmen have not yet contemplated the history of their own time as they would that of another. This is certainly the case with the greater number of us; while some few regard the story of this chapter with a sort of incredulity—a dread of giving way to romance—which disturbs their judgment, and obstructs their perception of the wonder and interest of the too unquestionable tale. It was not that the facts were any secret. They were published in newspapers, in reviews, and in the reports of parliamentary committees and debates. It was that few, in the midst of the pressing business of the time, saw the full significance, or felt the full enormity, of the case; and the few who did used a reserve and prudence so uncommon in them as to indicate the depth and force of their own impressions.

It was a time of revolutionary conspiracies; conspiracies to which those of the Castlereagh and Sidmouth times were trifles—conspiracies at both extremes of society—one under the steps of the throne—the other under the shadow of the workhouse. Of them we shall speak presently: but we must first show the reflex agitation of both as apparent in a remarkable movement in an intermediate portion of society.

CONDUCT OF THE PEERS.

It is unnecessary to present again the conduct of the majority of the Peers during the Reform struggle. It is, and ever will be, fresh in men's minds; the disgrace of the bishops above all; and next, the insolence and rancour of the least enlightened of the lay peers. From year to year they protracted the provocation they gave to the people at large, by obstructing and damaging measures of improvement which they could not wholly get rid of. They did this with a rashness which appeared unaccountable till revelations were made that showed how the most violent of the obstructive Peers had reckoned on political changes which should give them justification for the past, and their own way for the future. We have seen how they came to yield the point of Parliamentary Reform: but it was not known at the time how confidently they expected soon to repeal the Reform Bill. We have seen how they repeatedly extinguished the Irish Church bills sent up by large majorities of the Commons;—how fifteen bishops assembled at Lambeth to concert measures for intimidating the Ministry;—and how the Primate began his agitation in the

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Upper House before the measure was introduced there. We have seen how materially they injured the Municipal Reform Bill, in its principles as well as its details; and how they went up in a crowd to address the Sovereign in opposition to a liberal, though extremely small, educational measure, and received their due rebuke. If it were necessary to follow their action, step by step, through the legislation of the time, we should see that these were but a small part of the obstructions opposed by the majority of the Lords to necessary or desirable reforms.

It was not to be expected that the nation would bear this. The question, "What must be done with the Lords?" so familiar in 1830—1832, was not dropped; and a succession of replies to this question was proffered in the other House. Various members there proposed a reform of the House of Lords as a fitting sequel to the reform of their own; and the seriousness with which the question was discussed during the years 1835—1837 is rather startling to the reader of the present day, till he remembers the then recent abolition of the hereditary peerage in France, the triumphant reform of our own Lower House, and the insolent attitude of defiance assumed at the time by the Kenyons, Rodens, Wynfords, and Newcastles, who were secretly expecting a speedy restoration of their domination in the State.—The most favourable circumstance, perhaps, for them was, that Mr. O'Connell early pledged himself to procure a reform of the House of Lords. On Irish questions, Mr. O'Connell was supremely to be feared by his opponents, but not on questions which must be agitated elsewhere than in Ireland.—At the close of the session of 1835, he went on what he called "a mission" to the North of England and Scotland, to rouse the people to require an elective peerage—the election of a peer, for a term of years, by every 200,000 electors; which would yield a House of 130 peers for the 170 then sitting. He was received and feasted, with acclamations, by large numbers of people at Manchester, Newcastle, Edinburgh, and Glasgow. Yet no visible effect was produced—at least, none to the injury of the cause of the Peers; for O'Connell's oratory, so powerful in Ireland, seemed to astonish or amuse, rather than persuade, his English and Scotch audiences. The following seems a fair specimen of his methods of incitement: and no Englishman or Scotchman will wonder that it did not assist the subversion of so time-hallowed an institution as the British House of Peers. On meeting the Edinburgh Trades, he said, "We achieved but one good measure this last session; but that was not our fault; for the 170 tyrants of the country prevented us from achieving more. Ancient Athens was degraded for submitting to thirty tyrants: modern Athens will never allow 170 tyrants to rule over her. . . . . It was stated in one of the Clubs that at one time a dog had bitten the bishop; whereupon a noble lord, who was present, said, 'I will lay any wager that the bishop began the quarrel.' Now really the House of Lords began the quarrel with me. They may treat me as a mad dog if they please: I won't fight them: but I will treat them as the Quaker treated the dog which had attacked him. 'Heaven forbid,' said he, 'that I should do thee the slightest injury. I am a man of peace; and I will not hurt thee:' but when the dog went away, he cried out, 'Mad dog! Mad dog!' and all people set upon him. Now, that is my remedy with the House of Lords. I am more honest than the Quaker was; for the dog that attacked me is really mad. Bills

Peerage Reform.

O'Connell's Tour.

Annual Register, 1835, p. 369.

Spectator, 1835, p. 916.

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were rejected in the House of Lords simply because Daniel O'Connell supported them; and I do say that if I had any twelve men on a jury on a question of lunacy, I would put it to such jury to say if such men were not confirmed madmen. So you perceive the dog is really mad—and accordingly I have started on this mission to rouse the public mind to the necessity of reforming the House of Lords; and I have had 50,000 cheering me at Manchester; and 100,000 cheering me in Newcastle; and I heard one simultaneous cry, 'Down with the mad dogs, and up with common sense.' The same cry has resounded through Auld Reekie. The Calton Hill and Arthur's Seat re-echoed with the sound; and all Scotland has expressed the same determination to use every legitimate effort to remove the House of Lords. Though the Commons are with us, yet the House of Lords are against us; and they have determined that they will not concede a portion of freedom which they can possibly keep back. Sir Robert Peel, the greatest humbug that ever lived, and as full of political and religious cant as any man that ever canted in this canting world—feeling himself quite safe on his own dunghill, says that *we* want but one Chamber—one House of Radical Reformers. He knew that in saying this he was saying what was not true. We know too well the advantage of double deliberation not to support two Houses; but they must be subject to popular control; they must be the servants, not the masters, of the people."—It was true that Auld Reekie caught up the sound, and that the Calton Hill and Arthur's Seat re-echoed with the cry. O'Connell had a magnificent reception by the Edinburgh Trades and the United Irishmen: and the Calton Hill was covered with a dense mass of the well-dressed inhabitants of the city. "The reception of O'Connell by the immense assembly," we are told, "combined solemnity with enthusiasm." But the enthusiasm melted away, and the cry died out, without producing any effect on the constitution of the Lords' House. O'Connell could not lead a political reform any where but in Ireland, even where, as now, he began with every advantage.

Attacks on the House of Lords.

Much more effectual was the action within the walls of the House of Commons, on the ground of the petitions sent up during the mutilation of the Municipal Bill by the Peers. On the 2nd of September, Mr. Roebuck declared his intention of moving for leave to bring forward, in the next session, a Bill for the removal of the veto possessed by the House of Lords, substituting for this veto a suspensive power which should cause the reconsideration of any measure which the Peers should object to, but which suspensive power should not intercept the Royal assent to any Bill after its second passage through the Commons. Mr. Hume gave notice the same night, that he should move, early in the next session, for a Select Committee to inquire into the constitution and condition of the House of Peers—who the Peers were, how qualified, and how they discharged their duties. Some amusement was caused by Mr. Hume's courageous repudiation of all poetical feeling, and all antiquarian associations, when he complained of "the farce" of the forms of conference between the Lords and Commons, when the Peers were seated and covered, and the Commons standing and bare-headed—"to exchange two bits of paper;" as Mr. Hume said. He saw nothing of the old days which his words called up before the mind's eye of those who heard him—the days when the Peers were like Princes, each with a little army at his call; and when the unwarlike

Hansard, xxx. 1268.

1835. burgess representatives really did half worship or tremble before the valorous nobles of the land. It might be time, as Mr. Hume thought, to give up forms which had ceased to contain any truth; but Mr. Hume's way of setting about it amused some people, and shocked others, with the sense that he did not know what he was about. But, before that day twelvemonths, Mr. Hume stood higher than any other man in the House or in the kingdom, in connexion with the people's quarrel with the House of Lords. By him, the Lords had, by that time, been humbled, awed, brought to their senses—and this, by no vulgar clamour or extreme devices, but by industry and sagacity and courage applied in ascertaining and revealing facts which placed the most insolent of the Peers at the mercy of the Crown and the Commons.—Of this matter, however, the Members were not generally aware on this 2nd of September, 1835; and a third notice of motion was added to those of Mr. Roebuck and Mr. Hume. Mr. Cuthbert Rippon gave notice that, next session, he should ask leave to bring in a Bill to relieve the Archbishops and Bishops from their attendance in the House of Lords.

After the prorogation, the various political parties and leaders were watched with anxiety by the enlightened liberals of the country, who saw that something must be done to remove the obstructive quality of the Peers, if the legislation of the country was to proceed at all, in pursuance of the purposes of the Reform Bill. The Ministers were watched. Some of them used strong language on public occasions respecting the recent conduct of the obstructive Peers: and on Mr. O'Connell's return to Ireland, after his "mission" was concluded, he was invited to dine with the Lord-Lieutenant; an incident which was regarded by the Tory Peers as a declaration of war on the part of the Viceroy. On the other hand, Lord John Russell made a public and emphatic avowal that he was opposed to all further organic change; and the government newspapers declared, now without comment, and now with expressions of regret, that no views of any important modification of the structure of the Upper House were at present held by the administration. Few of any party doubted that Lord John Russell would learn to see the necessity of reform, by some means or other. There was a strong party in Parliament, and a large body of the nation occupied in thinking of what should be done: and, on the whole, the conclusion, in the autumn of 1835, was that the subject was ripe for discussion; but that it must take more than one session to bring the matter to a practical issue. There were few who imagined how prodigiously the inflation of the insolent section of the Peers would have subsided, without danger of organic change, before the close of the next session.

Globe, Oct. 7th, 1835.

On the 26th of April, 1836, Mr. Rippon made his promised motion to release the Spiritual Peers from their attendance in Parliament. It was opposed by Lord John Russell on the plea that it would lead to no practical result. On a division, 53 Members voted with Mr. Rippon, and 180 against him.—In May, Mr. O'Connell gave notice of his intention to introduce his proposal to make the Upper House elective. Some laughed—laughed in loud shouts; and others were very grave, thinking the matter too serious, in the existing state of affairs, for laughter. One member, Mr. G. Price, wished to move that the notice should be expunged from the notice-book: but here, Lord John Russell interposed in defence of the right of the Commons to

Hansard, xxxiii. 320.

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entertain any proposition for what any member might consider a reform in any branch of the legislature, even if it should extend to regulating the succession of the throne: in which he was clearly supported by historical precedent. Mr. Price withdrew his motion. The question, however, was not brought on, the events of the close of the session rendering any further humiliation of the obstructive Peers unnecessary. Sir W. Molesworth, who knew more of the singular history than almost any one, quietly dropped the motion for peerage reform of which he had given notice for 1837. But the Bishops were not yet to be left in peace.—Mr. Charles Lushington moved, on the 16th of February, for the exclusion of the Spiritual Peers from the Upper House, and was ably supported by Mr. Charles Buller, whose opinion was that the Bishops had abundant employment elsewhere; that they were seldom prepared to enlighten legislation on subjects which lay peculiarly within their province; and that they were invariably found voting with the Minister who gave them their sees. Lord John Russell opposed the motion with the question—where, if Parliament once began to modify the constitution of the country, would they stop?—How far would they go?—a question which Mr. Buller declared to be easily answered. They would go only as far as the door of the House of Lords, to show the Bishops out, and then leave them to go where they pleased. He, who had a great respect for the Bishops, thought them most honourably seated in their own dioceses, where they had as much business to do as would quite engross them. On this occasion, 92 members voted with the reforming mover, and 197 against him.—One more attack was made on the functions of the Peers in May of the same session, when Mr. Duncombe proposed the abolition of the Lords' privilege of voting by proxy. The resolution was thus worded:—"That the practice of any deliberative assembly deciding by proxy upon the rejection or adoption of legislative enactments, is so incompatible with every principle of justice and reason, that its continuance is daily becoming a source of serious and well-founded complaint among all classes of his Majesty's subjects." It was shown that when the practice of voting by proxy began, in the time of Edward I., the proxies were men of lower rank, sent as messengers by the nobles who could not attend in person; and that it was not till the reign of Henry VIII. that the abuse crept in of allowing one Peer to represent others. When, in the time of Charles I., the Duke of Buckingham held fourteen proxies, the evil was so evident as to cause an order to be passed that no peer should henceforth hold more than two proxies. In modern days, when legislation has become immediately interesting and important to the great mass of the people, the practice of proxy voting has become more indefensible than ever; and yet, the safeguard was withdrawn of the King's license being a condition of a Peer's absence. Lord Stanley and Sir R. Peel met the argument by likening proxy-voting to the custom of pairing in the Commons. The analogy was shown not to be a true one: and if it had been, the obvious reply would have been, "then abolish the custom of pairing, except on individual occasions." The majority of 48 against the motion was formed by the official Whigs and their dependents, so that the state of the question appeared by no means desperate. But again, events were occurring which deferred the controversy to a future time.

Hansard, xxxvi. 609.

Hansard, xxxvi. 625.

Hansard, xxxviii. 760.

Such was the course of the mildest of the three "revolutionary" move-

1835. ments of the period;—that in which the sober and educated classes of the community reflected the far more serious agitation which was going forward on either hand.

Chartism. It was at this period that men who went among the working classes of the great towns first began to speak of Chartism, Chartists, and the Charter. Some in higher ranks now and then asked what the words meant; but too many in every station—especially, too many in the ranks of government—did not look closely into it, but dismissed the matter as a thing low and disagreeable, and sure to come to nothing, from its extreme foolishness. It is the year 1838 before we find the word "Chartism" in the Annual Register; yet, long before that, Chartism had become the chief object in life to a not inconsiderable portion of the English nation. And when it came to be a word in the index of the Annual Register, government and their friends regarded it as a "topic of the day." When the great National Petition, bound with iron hoops, was carried, like a coffin, by four men from its waggon into the House of Commons, Ministers and their friends looked upon the show as upon an incident of that vulgar excitement which poor Radicals like or need, as the tippler likes or needs his dram. Reckoning on the fickleness of the multitude, they pronounced that Chartism would soon be extinct; and then that it was extinct. Their Attorney-General, Sir John Campbell, in a sort of declaratory ministerial speech at a public breakfast at Edinburgh, declared Chartism to be "extinct," shortly before the Monmouth rebellion. The chief law officer of the government gloried in the supremacy of loyalty, law, and order, immediately before the breaking out of a long-planned rebellion, of which every possible warning had been given, in the form of preceding riots! The newspapers agreed with the government; and government took its information from the newspapers; and thus, from year to year, was Chartism declared to be extinct, while we, in the present day, have the amplest evidence that it is as much alive as ever. And, as it is living so long after the announcement that it was dead, so was it living long before it was declared to be born. When government and London were at last obliged to take heed to it, they found that their tares were ready for harvest, and that long ago the enemy had been sowing them while they slept. While they slept, literally as well as metaphorically; for the gatherings and speechifyings had been by torchlight on the northern moors and the Welsh hill-sides. There were stirrings certainly as early as the date before us—the years 1835-36.

And what were these stirrings? What was it all about? The difficulty of understanding and telling the story is from its comprehending so vast a variety of things and persons. Those who have not looked into Chartism think that it means one thing—a revolution. Some who talk as if they assumed to understand it, explain that Chartism is of two kinds—Physical Force Chartism, and Moral Force Chartism—as if this were not merely an intimation of two ways of pursuing an object yet undescribed! Those who look deeper—who go out upon the moors by torchlight, who talk with a suffering brother under the hedge, or beside the loom, who listen to the groups outside the Union workhouse, or in the public-house among the Durham coal-pits, will long feel bewildered as to what Chartism is, and will conclude at last that it is another name for popular discontent—a comprehensive general term under which are included all protests against social suffering. And thus it was at the date before us, whether or not it be so now.

Radical Chartists.

There were men among the working classes, sound-headed and sound-hearted, wanting nothing but a wider social knowledge and experience to make them fit and safe guides of their order—(some few of them not deficient even in these)—who saw that the Reform Bill was, if not a failure in itself, a failure in regard to the popular expectation from it. If it was all that its framers meant it to be, they must give a supplement. A vast proportion of the people—the very part of the nation whose representation was most important to the welfare of the State—were not represented at all. As a sage expressed the matter for them not long afterwards, "A Reformed Parliament, one would think, should inquire into popular discontents *before* they get the length of pikes and torches! For what end at all are men, honourable members and reform members, sent to St. Stephen's, with clamour and effort; kept talking, struggling, motioning and counter-motioning? The condition of the great body of people in a country is the condition of the country itself: this you would say is a truism in all times; a truism rather pressing to get recognised as a truth now, and be acted upon, in these times. Yet read Hansard's Debates, or the morning papers, if you have nothing to do! The old grand question, whether A is to be in office or B, with the innumerable subsidiary questions growing out of that, courting paragraphs and suffrages for a blessed solution of that: Canada question, Irish Appropriation question, West India question, Queen's Bedchamber question; Game Laws, Usury Laws; African Blacks, Hill Coolies, Smithfield cattle, and Dog-carts—all manner of questions and subjects, except simply this, the Alpha and Omega of all! Surely honourable members ought to speak of the Condition of England question too—Radical members, above all; friends of the people; chosen with effort, by the people, to interpret and articulate the dumb deep want of the people! To a remote observer they seem oblivious of their duty. Are they not there, by trade, mission, and express appointment of themselves and others, to speak for the good of the British nation? Whatsoever great British interest can the least speak for itself, for that beyond all they are called to speak. They are either speakers for that great dumb toiling class which cannot speak, or they are nothing that one can well specify.—Alas, the remote observer knows not the nature of parliaments: how parliaments, extant there for the British nation's sake, find that they are extant withal for their own sake; how parliaments travel so naturally in their deep-rutted routine, common-place worn into ruts axle-deep, from which only strength, insight, and courageous generous exertion can lift any parliament or vehicle; how in parliament, reformed or unreformed, there may chance to be a strong man, an original, clear-sighted, great-hearted, patient and valiant man, or to be none such." The men we have spoken of—soon confounded in the group of Chartist leaders—felt and knew such things as Carlyle has here set down for them: felt that parliament had not done what was needed—that the people's story had not been told there—that the 'strong man' had not yet appeared there; and their conclusion was, that they might try and get the duty of parliament better done. They might possibly expect too much from the means they proposed;—extension of the suffrage, shortening of parliaments, protected voting, and establishing a control over repre-

Carlyle's 'Chartism,' p. 4.

1835. sentatives, and opening a wider field of choice of such, by paying the expenses of their function;—they might possibly expect too much from these aims; but it is a libel upon the best class of Chartist leaders to say that they expected from these aims all that they wanted. These men were the heartiest and truest advocates in the country of universal education. They saw more clearly than any body else, and lamented more deeply, the miseries arising from popular ignorance. They mourned over the murders and vitriol-throwing of the operatives who were enslaved by mercenary delegates:—they mourned over the fate of the followers of "Messiah Thom:"—they mourned over the nightly drillings on the heath, with pike and bludgeon:—they mourned over the nature of the opposition to the New Poor Law, when crowds of thousands of men who could never be called together again to be disabused, were assured by orators whom they took for educated men, that under the new Poor Law every poor man's fourth child was strangled; and that none but the rich were henceforth to have more than three children. They did more than mourn:—they spent their hard earnings, their spare hours, their sleeping hours, their health, their repose, to promote the education which the State did not give. By wonderful efforts, they established schools, institutes, lecture and reading rooms, and circulated knowledge among their class in every way they could think of. Such were some of the body soon to be called Chartists—as soon as their political ideas had resolved themselves into the form of a Charter which the people might demand. These men were all Radical Reformers. They saw little to choose between the Tories and the Whigs. As we again find their ideas expressed for them, "Why all this struggle for the *name* of a Reform Ministry? Let the Tories be Ministry, if they will; let at least some living reality be Ministry! A rearing horse that will only run backward, he is not the horse one would choose to travel on: yet of all conceivable horses the worst is the dead horse. Mounted on a rearing horse, you may back him, spur him, check him, make a little way even backwards: but seated astride of your dead horse, what chance is there for you in the chapter of possibilities?" These men wanted a strong, steady-going progression; and they would have therefore neither the pomp and prancings of Toryism, nor the incapacity of Whiggism. They were Radical Reformers.

Carlyle's 'Chartism,' p. 93.

Tory Chartists.

Another set were Tories—Tory agitators who went about to raise the people against the New Poor Law, and divert them from the aim of repealing the Corn Laws. These men, guilty or stupid, according as they were or were not really the Reverends and Esquires that the mob believed them to be, were the orators on the moors by torchlight. These were the men who taught in those thronged meetings that the Poor Law was a system of wholesale murder; and that no one could blame a poor man who carried a knife in his bosom for the workhouse official who should attempt to part him from his wife. These were the men who represented the whole class of manufacturers as devils who caused children to be tortured in factories for their own amusement; and too often the declamation ended with a hint that the hearers evidently knew how to get torches, and that factories would burn. These were the men who warned their hearers against a repeal of the Corn Laws, because these laws were the last restraint on the power of the mill-owners. These rabid and ranting Tories were another class of Chartists.

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Hungering Chartists.

There were thousands who knew little about themselves except that they were very hungry and miserable. A landed proprietor now and then, here and there, said in the House pretty things about the sun of Christ's natal day gilding the humble thatch of the labourer at the same moment with the spire of the church and the windows of the mansion—intending to convey that the joyousness of Christmas was shared by all ranks; while, the very next Christmas, in the very county, the very parish of these orators, the labourers were shivering without fire—cowering under a corner of the decaying thatch which let in snow and rain upon their straw litters—and hungering over the scantiest morsels of dry bread—one neighbour in four or eight, perhaps, having a slice of bacon, and a fire whereon to cook it. Such parishes as these furnished a contingent to the Chartist force—haggard wretches, ready to be called by any political name which might serve as a ticket to better cheer in life than they had found.

Factious Chartists.

Largest of all was the number of those who ought not to have felt themselves under any immediate pressure of wrong at all. There were many thousands of factory operatives, of Welsh, Durham and Cumberland colliers, and others, who were far from poor, if only they had been wise enough to see their condition as it was. But they were not wise enough; and that they were not was *their* social wrong. Of these, great numbers had a larger annual income than very many clergymen, half-pay officers, educators, and fundholders, who are called gentlemen: but they did not know how to regard and manage their own case:—they reckoned their income by the week instead of by the year, and spent it within the week:—had nothing to reply when asked, in a time of prosperity, why they who worked so hard had not mansions and parks like people who did nothing; and, in a pinching time, when hungry and idle at once, with hungry children crying in their cold homes, were too ready to believe, as desired, that every other man's fire and food and cheerfulness were so much out of their pockets. By no act of the State could these men have been blessed with higher wages: but if the State would have educated them, they might have found themselves abundantly blessed in their present gains:—they might have sat, in their school days, on the same bench with the curate, and the seaman, and the schoolmaster, and the tradesman, whom they were now envying and hating; and might now have been content, like them, with the position which was "neither poverty nor riches." But the State had left them ignorant; and here they were, drilling on a hill side, and plotting to burn, slay, and overthrow. They had an indistinct but fixed idea that there was unbounded wealth every where, for every body, if only there were no tyrants to intercept it; and there can be no wonder in any sympathizing mind and heart, that a man in a desolate home, without occupation, and suffering under that peculiar state of brain caused by insufficiency of food, becomes a torch-bearing Chartist, or anything else, however clear it may be that the money he had earned might, if wisely managed, have made him a ten-pound householder, exercising the suffrage, and a capitalist, giving education to his children.

Hansard, xxvi. 65.

It was but lately that the King's Speech had intimated the prosperity of commerce and manufactures, while agriculture was grievously depressed. But already, there was some sense abroad of evil to come. Trade slackened, and

1835. became irregular, and the most sagacious men of business began to apprehend that a new term of commercial distress was setting in. They were right; only, their apprehensions did not compass any thing like the truth. It is well that they did not; for a mere glimpse of the horrors of the seven years to come would have been too much for the courage of any but the boldest of the enterprising classes of British merchants and manufacturers. Though they saw little, they soon began to feel uneasy, with an uneasiness far transcending any reason that they could give for it. As yet, wages were scarcely lowered, though profits were sensibly sinking: but the employed assumed a new air to their employers, in many a town and factory district in England—a sauciness that seemed to say they felt themselves injured, and were not going to put up with it long. This was the temper which was fast growing into the Chartism of 1839.

But that seven years' distress brought out an opposite class of facts of the most cheering nature, as we shall see under their date. We shall see, hereafter, something of the marvellous and sublime patience of the working classes under a trial which might well be thought too sore for human endurance. This patience was in precise proportion, and in the clearest connexion, with the knowledge by this time gained by the working class most concerned—that there is no such thing as an inexhaustible fund of wealth, and that no tyrants were standing between them and comfort. The patient class knew that they had had their share—as shares are at present naturally apportioned:—they could and did live for a long series of months on the savings they had made; and when at last they were left bare, they knew that the richest capitalists were sinking too. Of this class many hundreds were Chartists; but they did not carry pikes and torches, to avenge discontents of their own. The People's Charter was then in existence; and their aim was to carry that. It would give them, as they believed, a parliament which would understand their case, and cure many evils under which they were suffering. And some had visions of an association of small capitalists, who might defy the fickleness of fortune: and some dreamed of buying a field and being safe and in harbour there, through some wonderful skill and simple arrangements of Chartist leaders. But these were not the revolutionary Chartists who were at work, burrowing in the foundations of society at the date before us. The better class came in later—after the promulgation of the Charter—as, indeed, did many of the worst: but, in 1835 and 1836, the boring was begun, and the train was laying, which produced, for one result among many, the explosion at Monmouth in 1839.

Orangeism. The revolutionary movement referred to as occurring at the other end of society was one which it would be scarcely possible to credit now, but for the body of documentary evidence which leaves no shadow of doubt on any of the principal features of the conspiracy. The whole affair appears so unsuited to our own time, and the condition of our monarchy—so like a plunge back into a former century—that all the superiority of documentary evidence of which we have the advantage is needed to make the story credible to quiet people who do not dream of treason-plots and civil war in England in our day.

A month before Sir R. Peel's resignation in the spring of 1835, the Liberal party throughout the country were surprised by the appearance of a sudden fit of captiousness and pertinacity in some of their representatives, in teazing the Ministers about the reception of addresses from Orange Societies to the King. From the temper of the time in the House, and especially among the Opposition, any captiousness must have been great indeed which could have struck every body as remarkable. Member after member rose to cross-examine the Ministers (who themselves could have hardly understood the proceeding), as to whether the addresses purported to be from Orange Societies; whether the King could or ought to receive addresses from associations of declared illegality; whether the replies given had really, as the newspapers said, been avowedly gracious; whether the graciousness had been connected with a recognition of the parties as Orangemen; and finally, and very seriously, whether Mr. Goulburn, as Minister of the Crown, considered an Orange Lodge to be legal or illegal, and whether he was prepared to justify the presentation of an address from such a Society to the sovereign.—The Ministers were probably surprised and perplexed, beginning to see that this was a matter of high importance, but hardly understanding why or how: for no one of them rose for a considerable time. After the dead silence in which the question had been listened to, and the rising of the Minister looked for, vociferous cheers from the Opposition filled the House when he did not rise. At length Mr. Goulburn made his answer. The reply to the addresses was intended as an acknowledgment of their receipt, and not as any recognition of the legality of the party name by which the signers might designate themselves. Cheering no less loud followed the reply. Perhaps no cheers given in that House—not even those which signalized the passage of the Reform Bill—ever carried such anxiety and pain to the hearts of certain of the Tory Peers; and especially of the highest Prince of the Blood, the eldest of the King's brothers. He and some others of the Peers could very well understand what all this might mean, while it was a singular mystery to the country at large.

Hansard, xxvi. 536—554.

Spectator, 1835, p. 219.

The country at large knew little about Orange Societies, except that the Orangemen in Ireland were proud of their loyalty, and made conspicuous processions on great Protestant occasions, and were ever and anon coming to blows with the Catholics. Orangeism belonged exclusively to Ireland, in the general mind. People generally would have stared to hear that Orangeism was in England, Scotland, and the Colonies, and that it constituted an army of itself, in the midst of the military forces of the empire.—Orangeism was exclusively Irish at first—in 1795, when it was first heard of. Before that time, the Protestants who patrolled the country, to prevent the seizure of arms by the Catholics in the night, in preparation for their insurrection, bore the name of "Peep-o'-day Boys." The Catholics, who organized themselves against these patrolling bands, called themselves "Defenders," and soon extended the term to include the defence of "The United Nations of France and Ireland." As soon as the aim of an Union with France was avowed, and a descent of the French upon the coasts of Ireland was expected, the Protestants began to improve and extend their organization, in the hope of preserving the Union with England. They would have taken the title of "Defenders," but that their adversaries already bore it. They reverted to the period of the bringing in of a Protestant sovereign over the head of the Catholic James II., and called themselves Orangemen. Such, at least, is the traditionary account

Hall's Ireland, ii. 462.

1835. in the district where Orangeism sprang up. The Diamond—a little hamlet, about five miles from Armagh, where a conflict took place in 1795, which is called the Battle of the Diamond, is assigned as the birth-place of Orangeism. A few yeomen and farmers joined for mutual defence and the assertion of British rights, after the Battle of the Diamond; and this was the first Orange Lodge. The gentry saw what this might grow to, and encouraged the formation of Lodges, and the promulgation of rules. As Presbyterians abounded in that part of the country, they formed the main element of the societies; and it is said that the religious observances of the Orange Lodges which afterwards degenerated into a subject of scandal when Dissenters were no longer admitted, were introduced originally by them. The Orangemen of Ireland were the deadly foes of the "United Irishmen," and the most effective check upon them, and they have even claimed the credit of having preserved Ireland to England.

London Review, No. iv. p. 490.

Perhaps it was through the connexion of some English noblemen with Irish property that Orange institutions were introduced into England. Lodges were at first held in England under Irish warrants: but in 1808 a Lodge was founded in Manchester, and warrants were issued for the holding of Lodges under the English authority. On the death of the Grand Master at Manchester, the Lodge was removed to London, in 1821, and the meetings were held at the house of Lord Kenyon, who was Deputy Grand Master. The Duke of York was to have been Grand Master; but he found that the law officers of the Crown considered the institution an illegal one. The rules were modified so as to meet the terms of the law. The Act which prohibited political societies in Ireland from 1825 to 1828, appeared to dissolve Orangeism there for the time: but Lodges were held under English warrants: and in 1828, the whole organization sprang up, as vigorous as ever, on the expiration of the Act.—At this time, the entire Institution, in Great Britain and Ireland, came under the direction of the Duke of Cumberland, as Grand Master. The critical part of the history, as regards England, lies between the years 1828 and 1836. In 1829, when the Duke of York was gone, and the King had given the Royal Assent to the Emancipation Act, the Orangemen seem to have lost their senses, as they certainly lost their loyalty. The proofs of this which came out in 1835, when the Orangemen on our side the Irish Channel numbered 140,000—40,000 of whom were in London—bewildered the nation with amazement.

1828.
Duke of Cumberland.
Report of Committee on Orange Societies, September, 1835.
Col. Fairman.

In 1828, on the accession of the Duke of Cumberband to the throne of Orangeism, he sent forth, under a commission of the Great Seal—("given under my seal, at St. James's, this 13th day of August, 1828. Ernest, G. M.")—a certain person, chosen "from a knowledge of his experience, and a confidence in his integrity," the "trusty, well-beloved, and right worshipful brother, Lieut.-Col. Fairman." This person, thus chosen and confided in by the Duke of Cumberland, had a plenary authority, declared in the Commission under the Great Seal of the Order, to establish Orangeism wherever he could, and by whatever means he thought proper. He went to Dublin, in order to bring the Irish and English Lodges into one perfect system of secret signs and passwords: and he made two extensive tours, in England and Scotland, to visit and establish Lodges in all the large towns and populous neighbourhoods

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where he believed he could bring the people to "rally round the Throne and the Church"—(to use the language of the party and the time). The nation at large saw no particular occasion for rallying round the Throne, as it seemed to them that the House of Brunswick never was safer. But the Orange leaders, apparently driven frantic by the reforms of the time, were of a different opinion. They actually got it into their heads, at the time when the Duke of Wellington was carrying the Catholic Emancipation Act, and George IV. was evidently sinking, that the Duke of Wellington himself meant to seize the Crown. Men laughed when they first heard this; and men will always laugh, whenever they hear it: but that such were the apprehensions of the Orange leaders is shown by correspondence in Col. Fairman's hand-writing, which was brought before the Parliamentary Committee of 1835. The following is an extract from a letter evidently designed for the Grand Master Ernest himself, and written during the last illness of George IV.:—"Should an indisposition, which has agitated the whole country for a fortnight, take a favourable turn—should the Almighty in his mercy give ear unto the supplications that to his heavenly throne are offered up daily, to prolong the existence of one deservedly dear to the nation at large—a divulgement I have expressed a willingness to furnish would be deprived of no small portion of its value. Even in this case, an event, for the consummation of which, in common with all good subjects, I obtest the Deity, it might be as well your Royal Highness should be put in possession of the rash design in embryo, the better to enable you to devise measures for its frustration; at any rate, you would not then be taken by surprise, as the nation was last year, but might have an opportunity of rallying your forces and of organizing your plans for the defeat of such machinations as might be hostile to your paramount claims. Hence, should the experiment be made, and its expediency be established, your Royal Highness would be in a situation to contend for the exercise in your own person of that office at which the wild ambition of another may prompt him to aspire." Who this "other" was is plainly expressed in two subsequent letters. It was Wellington!—the devoted Wellington, who perilled his reputation for consistency, and what his party call political honour, over and over again, rather than "desert his sovereign." Wellington lived to have this said of him by a man claiming to be a Colonel in his own "perfect machine" of an army. In a letter from Fairman to Sir James Cockburn, in which he gives a most imposing account of the numbers and discipline of the Orange forces in Ireland and Great Britain, he speaks of grovelling worms who dare to vie with the Omnipotence of Heaven; and of one among them he writes thus:—"One, moreover, of whom it might ill become me to speak but in terms of reverence, has nevertheless been weak enough to ape the coarseness of a Cromwell, thus recalling the recollection to what would have been far better left in oblivion. His seizure of the diadem, with his planting it upon his brow, was a precocious sort of self-inauguration." This seems a subject for fun—for a caricature of the day—so admirably is the charge in opposition to all the Duke of Wellington's tendencies: but there were some things in connexion with this matter too serious to be laughed at. At the first hint of treason, men were roused to indignation on behalf of the good-natured King William, of whom it had been in contemplation to dispose so easily; and much more strongly did their affections spring to guard from

London Review, V. 202.

London Review, V. 204.

1835. insult and injury the fatherless young Princess whose rights were thus dealt with by that trusty and well-beloved brother Fairman, whom the Duke of Cumberland sent forth as his representative. On this letter being published, people began to understand the strange proceedings, and the violence of the debate about a Regency, after the accession of William IV. And on this letter being published, people began to remember how, from one occasion to another, rumours of the insanity of King William came floating abroad from the recesses of Toryism, till exploded by contact with free air and daylight. The 1830. letter is dated April 6, 1830—during the last illness of George IV., and it is addressed to the Editor of the Morning Herald:— London Review, V. 203.

"Dear Sir,—From those who may be supposed to have opportunities of knowing 'the secrets of the Castle,' the King is stated to be by no manner in so alarming a state as many folks would have it imagined. His Majesty is likewise said to dictate the bulletins of his own state of health. Some whisperings have also gone abroad, that in the event of the demise of the Crown, a Regency would probably be established, for reasons which occasioned the removal of the next in succession from the office of High Admiral. That a maritime government might not prove consonant to the views of a military chieftain of the most unbounded ambition, may admit of easy belief; and as the second heir-presumptive is not alone a female, but a minor, in addition to the argument which might be applied to the present, that in the ordinary course of nature it was not to be expected that his reign could be of long duration, in these disjointed times it is by no means unlikely a vicarious form of government may be attempted. The effort would be a bold one, but after the measures we have seen, what new violations should surprise us? Besides, the popular plea of economy and expedience might be urged as the pretext, while aggrandisement and usurpation might be the latent sole motive. It would only be necessary to make out a plausible case, which, from the facts on record, there could be no difficulty in doing, to the satisfaction of a pliable and obsequious set of Ministers, as also to the success of such an experiment.

Most truly yours,
W. B. F."

There is nothing to wonder at now in the pertinacity with which the Opposition questioned the Peel Ministry about Orange addresses. Mr. Hume had got hold of these letters of 1830-31, and the members who cheered so loudly on the perplexity of the Ministers, were aware how the loyal Orangemen had listened to suggestions for making the Duke of Cumberland King, to prevent the usurpation of the Crown by the Duke of Wellington; for expecting that William IV. would be superseded on an allegation of insanity, and the Princess Victoria because she was a woman, and probably still a minor. If the Orangemen, with all their importance of rank, wealth, and numbers—with their array of British peers, and their army of 140,000 men, avowedly ready for action—could have shown that they did not listen to such suggestions, and that Col. Fairman was a crack-brained adventurer, with whose wild notions they had no concern, they would assuredly have done so. But it was impossible: the proof was too strong the other way. The letters cited above were written in 1830-31; and a long array of correspondence shows that the trusted and beloved William Blennerhassett Fairman lost no ground with the heads of the party by his speculations. Some of the most offensive suggestions were set forth in "a series of essays," written at the request of a noble lord, for that noble lord's information;—that noble lord being Lord Kenyon: and these essays were handed over to the Duke of Cumberland, who kept them by him. In December, 1831, and in January, 1832, Col. Fairman had long and confidential conversations with the Duke of Cumberland at Kew; and there were more such interviews in February. On the 19th of the next April, Col. Fairman was unanimously elected to the most important office in the society, that of Deputy Grand Secretary—the present Duke of Buckingham being Secretary. Col. Fairman was nominated by the Duke of Cumberland, seconded by Lord Kenyon, and supported by the Duke of Gordon. In June, Col. Fairman went forth on his mission among the Lodges, furnished by the Duke of Cumberland with powers so extensive as to render it a serious and difficult matter to draw up his commission.

1835.

ORANGE PEERS.

London Review, V. p. 205: Letter B.

1832.

p. 208: Letter 12.

p. 187.

It is under this date that Lord Londonderry appears on the scene. Before leaving London on this mission, Col. Fairman learned from the lips of the Duke of Cumberland, as he declared, that he had written to Lord Londonderry on Orange affairs, and Col. Fairman therefore wrote with more explicitness, he says, than he should otherwise have done. The subject is establishing Orange clubs among the pitmen on the estates of the Marquess; and his Lordship's agent and Col. Fairman had already been consulting about it. Considering the "popish Cabinet and democratical Ministry," with which the country was oppressed, Col. Fairman thought fit to suggest in this letter, "By a rapid augmentation of our physical force, we might be able to assume a boldness of attitude which should command the respect of our Jacobinical rulers." . . . . "If we prove not too strong for such a government as the present is, such a government will soon prove too strong for us: some arbitrary step would be taken in this case, for the suspension of our meetings. Hence the necessity for our laying aside that non-resistance, that passive obedience, which has hitherto been religiously enforced, to our own discomfiture." He further relates how he was reproached by Lord Longford, in a long conversation, the day before, for the tameness of the British Orangemen, while the Irish were resolved to resist all attempts to put them down. In a short letter, a few days afterwards, he says he writes to supply an omission—he had forgotten to say that the Orange leaders had the military with them:—"We have the military with us, as far as they are at liberty to avow their principles and sentiments: but since the lamented death of the Duke of York, every impediment has been thrown in the way of their holding a Lodge." (It will be remembered that the Duke of York withdrew from his intended position of Grand Master on being assured of the illegality of the Association.)—We have the answer of the Marquess of Londonderry to the above letters; the purport of which is that he had consulted Lord Kenyon, who hoped to convince the Duke of Cumberland that "the moment had not arrived," owing to the refractory state of the pitmen, and the Whig temper of the county; but, says the last sentence, "I will lose no opportunity of embracing any opening that may arise." Lord Londonderry admitted in the House of Lords all the facts of

p. 208: Letter 12.

p. 209: Letter 13.

p. 209: Letter 14.

1835. this correspondence, only explaining that the Duke of Cumberland's wishes were made known to him through Lord Kenyon, and not by interview or letter.—In the same month of August in which his commission bears date, p. 210: Letter 15. there is a letter of Fairman's to the Duke of Gordon, in answer to an invitation to Gordon Castle, in which he anticipates that "we shall be assuming, I think, such an attitude of boldness as will strike the foe with awe; but we inculcate the doctrine of passive obedience and of non-resistance too religiously by far." He has letters, he says, written "in the highest spirits," from Lords Kenyon and Londonderry, Longford and Cole; and he declares his expectation of an approaching crisis.—It was after all this that he still went to Kew, and "was closeted three hours" with his Royal Highness.—It was after these things—viz. on October 24th of the same year—that Lord Wynford wrote to Col. Fairman in praise of the Duke of Cumberland, and that "the Tories have not been sufficiently grateful to him," winding up with the following p. 213: Letter 23. words:—"As you are so obliging in your last letter as to ask my advice as to whether you should pursue the course you have so ably begun, I can only say that you must exercise your discretion as to the company in which you make such appeals as that which I have seen reported. When you meet only sure Tories, you may well make them feel what they owe to one who is the constant, unflinching champion of the party, and who, by his steady course, has brought on himself all the obloquy that a base, malignant faction can invent." Col. Fairman quoted Lord Wynford and Lord Kenyon to each other, as conp. 215: Letter 30. sulted by him, "on the propriety of my continuing to introduce the Duke's name in the prominent shape I had previously done." "If he" (the Duke) "would but make a tour into these parts," continues the Colonel, "for which I have prepared the way, he would be idolized." By "these parts," he means Doncaster, whose maudlin loyalty—such loyalty as he saw—the tears of the p. 216: Letter 31. gentlemen, which made him "play the woman"—the enthusiasm of the "noble dames," whom he compliments with the title of "the blue belles of Yorkshire,"—is described in a letter too absurd to have been penned by the confidential agent of Princes and Lords on the gravest political matters. It was a grave affair to the private interests of some of the brethren, if we may p. 215: Letter 28. 1833. judge by a letter of Lord Kenyon's to Col. Fairman, in January, 1833. "The good cause," writes his Lordship, "is worth all the help that man can give it, but our only trust must be in God. In the last two years and a half I shall have spent, I suspect, in its behalf, nearer 20,000*l.* than 10,000*l.*"—We find the Orange Peers continuing their confidence to Col. Fairman up to the time p. 220: Letter 45. of the demand of a Parliamentary Committee. Lord Roden writes to him about "our cause." Lord Kenyon confides to him his views of the comparap. 220: Letter 47. tive influence of some Scotch Peers, and observes, "It is a great pity, too, that the amiable Duke of Buccleuch does not see the immense importance of his p. 221: Letter 48. sanctioning such a cause as the Orange cause." Lord Thomond writes to him about his subscription, in England and Ireland. Lord Wynford reports 1834. to him, in April, 1834, a private consultation between the Duke of Cumberland, Lord Kenyon, and himself, about the purchase of a newspaper, and p. 221: Letter 49. declares it highly probable that something would soon be done about it by the Carlton Club. Another "sound paper, as well as the *Morning Post*," was wanted; and the *Age* had previously been thought of—its "scurrility" and "looseness of principle" being admitted, but Lord Kenyon not admitting, "as some do, that the private characters of public men ought to be considered sacred against all attack." This newspaper, the *Age*, was at that precise date occupying itself, week by week, with exhibiting the personal infirmities and peculiarities of the Whig Ministers—the baldness, the lameness, the nervous twitchings, the short-sightedness, and so on. Lord Kenyon seems to have considered these things as belonging to private character—"not to be considered sacred against all attack." But the subject of the moralities of the Orange leaders is too large an one to be entered upon here. The gleanings which might be made from the Evidence of the Report would afford material for a curious inquiry into the theory of Christianity held by men whose boast (by the mouth of Lord Kenyon) was, "Ours is the cause of all friends of Christianity," and whose most Christian hope was of "the arrival of a day of reckoning," when certain "hell hounds" would "be called on to pay the full penalty of their cold-blooded tergiversations." So late as July 27th, 1834, we find the Duke of Gordon confiding to Col. Fairman his gladness "that the unprincipled Ministers remain to do more mischief; as yet we are not ready for a change." It is clear that there could be no attempt on the part of the Orange leaders to repudiate Col. Fairman as their confidential agent: and when all this correspondence, and much more, was laid before the Parliamentary Committee, it became a matter of serious consideration how to proceed.

p. 207: Letter 8A.

p. 211: Letter 17.

p. 207: Letter 7.

p. 221: Letter 50.

There was much more behind.—It was important to know what was "the prominent shape" that the agent gave to the name of the Duke of Cumberland, in his assemblages of Orangemen, throughout his tour. It was charged upon Fairman, by an Orangeman of the name of Haywood, that he had sounded his hearers at Sheffield and elsewhere on their willingness to support the Duke of Cumberland as their sovereign, if, as was probable, William IV. should be deposed for his assent to the Reform Bill. Col. Fairman denied this: but his word did not go for much with those who had read his correspondence, nor with any who knew that it had been proved in a Court of Justice that he had given a false address to get rid of a troublesome creditor.

London Rev., iv. p. 482, note.

PLOT.

London Rev., v. p. 187, note.

Again, it was discovered that of the 381 Lodges existing in Great Britain, 30 were in the army: and that Lodges existed among the troops at Bermuda, Gibraltar, Malta, Corfu, New South Wales, Van Diemen's Land, and our North American colonies. The Duke of Cumberland and Lord Kenyon positively asserted that they were ignorant of the fact of the existence of an Orange organization at all in the army. But in the correspondence we find Lord Kenyon writing to the Colonel "His Royal Highness promises being in England a fortnight before Parliament assembles.—To him, privately, you had better address yourself about your military proposition, which, to me, appears very judicious."—Again, "The statement you made to me before, and respecting which I have now before me particulars from Portsmouth—should be referred to his Royal Highness, as military matters of great delicacy. At the same time, private intimation, I submit, should be made to the military correspondents, letting them know how highly we esteem them as brethren."—Again, "If you hear any thing further from the Military Districts, let his Royal Highness know all particulars fit to be communicated." So much for

LODGES.

THE ARMY.

p. 211: Letter 27.

p. 218: Letter 36.

p. 219: Letter 40.

1835. Lord Keynon's ignorance of Orangeism in the army!—But there was, as regarded the Duke, more direct evidence in the records of the Lodge meetings at which he presided, and himself granted new warrants to soldiers present, some of which are actually entitled "military warrants." The military Lodges were entered in the books, noticed by the Circular Reports of the meetings where the Duke of Cumberland presided; and the laws and ordinances, containing provisions for attracting soldiers and sailors by a remission of the fees, are declared to have been inspected and approved by the Duke, and handed over to Lord Kenyon for final supervision. Thus, it is not wonderful that the Committee reported "That they find it most difficult to reconcile statements in evidence before them, with ignorance of these proceedings on the part of Lord Kenyon, and by his Royal Highness the Duke of Cumberland."

No. iv. p. 498–500.

The Church. Such was the dealing of these loyal leaders with the army.—As for the Church, they had the Bishop of Salisbury for Lord Prelate and Grand Chaplain of the Order; and there were twelve or thirteen deputy grand chaplains, and clergymen as Masters of Lodges and managers of their affairs. Not a single minister of religion out of the Establishment belonged to the order in England. The religious observances, conducted by the clergymen, bore but too close a resemblance to the mummeries of the poor Dorsetshire labourers,—as did the proceedings altogether, in their illegality. In one of the circulars, the clergy are invited to come in, and take appointments, with the notification that no salary was attached to office, but that it might lead to patronage. In one of these circulars, the position of the Church, in the eyes of Orangemen of the period, is described in language too indecent for quotation. As for the rest, the Grand Lodge declared itself possessed of "the facility of knowing the principles of every man in the country;" the institution excluded Roman Catholics and Dissenters, and included the most violent and unscrupulous of the Peers; it numbered 140,000 actual members in Great Britain, and 175,000 in Ireland; it expelled members who voted for liberal candidates; it proposed the employment of physical force within a proximate time, to overthrow the liberal institutions which had just been gained; it was beginning to interfere with the common duties and rights of men—as when a Lodge of pitmen in Scotland expelled a body of Catholics "who had before lived and worked with them in peace and harmony:" and, at the latest date, it was found holding out threats to the half-pay of the army and navy to draw them to itself in preference to other political unions. "It is the bounden duty of such" (pensioners and disbanded soldiers) "in a crisis of danger like the present (February, 1835), to enlist under the banners of a loyal association, instead of repairing to factious unions, no less hostile to sound policy than to true religion, at the imminent risk of incurring a just forfeiture of their hard-earned remunerations, of which a scrupulous government would not hesitate to deprive them. Of this intelligible hint the half-pay of the army and navy might do well to profit, in a prospective sense."

p. 487.

Action of Orangeism.

No. iv. p. 497.

p. 200.

1835. Detection. Such was the institution—the great conspiracy against the national will and national interests—the conspiracy against the rights of all, from the King on the throne to the humblest voter, or soldier, or sailor, or Dissenter, or Catholic—which was discovered by the energy and diligence of Mr. Hume in 1835.

1835.

Such as has been related was the information of which minds were full, on the Opposition side of the House, when that scene of pertinacity was transacted which perplexed all who did not yet understand the case. The simple-minded King had been receiving, with studied graciousness, addresses from these illegal societies, in which the question of his deposition had certainly been agitated.—The question was now, what should be done?

The seriousness of the question, and of the whole case, was relieved by the certainty, speedily obtained, that the institution, with its political objects, its signs and pass-words, and its oaths, was illegal. There was some reluctance, here and there, to admit the illegality; but the opinion of the most eminent lawyers soon settled the matter.—It might be fortunate too that the seriousness of the case was relieved by the touches of the comic which we have encountered—the Duke of Wellington, of all people, crowning himself with the diadem; and the Doncaster loyalists—the "blue belles of Yorkshire" smiling, and their fathers and brothers weeping, over that hero of romance, the Duke of Cumberland; and the style, both of letters and circulars, which must come in among the comic incidents of the case.—The extreme silliness of the conspirators—a fair set-off, as it appears to us, against the ignorance of the Dorsetshire labourers—was another fortunate alleviation of the seriousness of the case; though it is no light matter to see so great a number of men—some powerful through rank and wealth—playing the fool, and compelled virtually to petition to be thought fools, as the only alternative from the reputation of traitors. With all its nonsense, and looked at from any pinnacle of superiority, this was a very serious matter. How was it to be dealt with?

COMMITTEE OF INQUIRY. Hansard, xxvii. 135.

The first thing done was obtaining a Committee of Inquiry in the Commons, within three weeks after the scene of pertinacious questioning with which the revelations began. Before the Committee had reported, portions of the evidence were published in the newspapers: and several people, besides Mr. Hume, thought that no time was to be lost in exposing and annihilating the illegal practice of maintaining political societies in the army. Amidst many complaints of his proceeding before the Committee had reported, Mr. Hume moved eleven resolutions, on the 4th of August, declaratory of the facts of Orangeism, of its illegality in the army, according to the general orders issued by the Commander-in-Chief, in 1822 and 1829; and ending with a proposal of an Address to the King, calling his attention to the whole subject, and especially to the Duke of Cumberland's share in the illegal transactions complained of.—Mr. Hume's opponents alleged that the military warrants must have been misapplied without the knowledge of the chief officers of the association, whose signatures were given to blank warrants, in order to their being sent out in parcels of a hundred or two, in the confidence that they would be properly employed; and also, they declared that Orangeism in the army was a purely defensive measure, against Ribband societies, and other secret associations, whose suppression they required, if Orange Lodges were put down. To this there could be no objection in any quarter. The last of Mr. Hume's resolutions was objected to as conveying, inevitably, more or less censure on the Duke of Cumberland; a proceeding which could not be justified before the delivery of the Committee's Report and Evidence. Lord

MR. HUME'S RESOLUTIONS. Hansard, xxx. 58—79.

1835.

John Russell, who had to act and speak for the government in the Lower House, went through this affair with eminent prudence, courage, and moderation. The Whig administrations had been blamed by some parties in the House for supineness in permitting the pranks of the Orangemen for so long; and it was alleged that they had thought the organization too formidable to be meddled with, during a season of political transition. It might be so. Certainly, the prudence, quietness, and guarded moderation, of Lord John Russell throughout the whole transaction conveyed an impression that the affair was, in his view, one of extreme gravity, though he did not say so, but rather made as light of it as circumstances would permit. He now moved that the debate should be adjourned to the 11th of August—that is, for a week—giving a broad hint to the Duke of Cumberland to use the time in withdrawing himself from all connexion with the Orange association.

Hansard, xxx. 100.

The Duke of Cumberland. Annual Register, 1835, p. 332.

The Duke did not take the hint. He merely wrote and published a letter to the Chairman of the Committee, in which he denied having ever issued warrants to soldiers, or known of such being issued—declared that he had declined sending out military warrants, on the ground of their violation of the general orders of 1822 and 1829—and intimated that all warrants inconsistent with those orders should be annulled.—How the Duke's denial was regarded by the Committee, we have already seen, in a sentence of their Report.—Lord J. Russell had shown his prudence in the debate of the 4th: now, on the 11th, he showed his courage. He declared his impression that the Duke had not done what the House had a right to expect from him. If the Duke had merely signed blank warrants, and his Orange brethren had betrayed his confidence in filling them up in a manner which he was known to disapprove, the least he could have done would be to withdraw himself at once, and in a conspicuous manner, from persons who had so deceived him: but the Duke appeared to have no intention of so withdrawing. Mr. Hume's last Resolution was therefore agreed to, with the omission of the assertion at the end that the warrants were designed for the establishment of Orange Lodges in the army.—On the 15th, the King's reply was read to the House. It promised the utmost vigilance and vigour in suppressing political societies in the army. On the 19th, the House was informed that Col. Fairman had refused to produce to the Committee a letter-book which he acknowledged to be in his possession, and which was essential to the purposes of the Committee. He was called before the House, where he repeated his refusal; was advised by some of the Orange members to yield up the book; persisted in his refusal; and was admonished by the Speaker that he must obey the orders of the House.—On the 20th, as it appeared that he was still contumacious, it was ordered that he should be committed to Newgate, for a breach of privilege: but by this time he had disappeared.—The book was really much wanted. It was known to contain replies to letters in the hands of the Committee on the establishment of Orange Lodges in certain regiments at Gibraltar and elsewhere; and must afford information on the proceedings of the Orange missionary, named Uccalli, who had complained of the difficulty of establishing Orange Lodges among the troops in the Ionian Islands, from the vigilant resistance of Lord Nugent and the other authorities. The Committee earnestly desired to have the book: and it was moved that the House should

Hansard, xxx. 304.

Address to the King.

Reply. Hansard, xxx. 559.

Hansard, xxx. 677.

Col. Fairman's Contumacy. Hansard, xxx. 777.

Hansard, xxx. 676.

1835.

order Col. Fairman's papers to be searched. It was believed that the House had this power; but, considering the odium of exercising it, and the probability that where Col. Fairman was secreted, there were all his important papers likewise, it was thought best not to issue the order.

Proposed Prosecution.

Next, it was ascertained, by certain parties determined to carry this matter through, that the case of the Orange leaders was analogous to that of the Dorsetshire labourers. They had become liable under the same law; and it was now resolved that, if evidence could be obtained, the Duke of Cumberland, Lord Kenyon, the Bishop of Salisbury, and others, and Col. Fairman, should be brought to trial before the Central Criminal Court. The prosecutors got hold of Haywood—the Orangeman who had taken fright at Fairman's incitements to treason, had made them known, and was prosecuted for libel in consequence. It was clear to the Committee that the evidence bore out Haywood's statements: and those who were about to prosecute the Orange leaders appointed counsel for Haywood's defence—the Counsel retained being Serjeant Wilde, Mr. Charles Austin, and Mr. Charles Buller.—For the prosecution, the most eminent Counsel were retained: the indictments were drawn (notwithstanding the difficulty of assigning the exact title of the Duke of Cumberland); the evidence was marshalled; the original letters were arranged; and all was prepared, when two events happened which rendered further proceedings unnecessary.

London Rev., v. p. 183.

Death of Haywood.

Poor Haywood died through apprehension. He felt himself the probable victim of the great association whose power he well knew, and whose wrath he had brought upon himself: and he was not yet aware of the powerful protection to be extended over him, when he broke a blood-vessel, through agitation of mind. It was then too late to save him; and he died a few days before the trial was to have come on.—The other cause of delay was a request from Mr. Hume that all proceedings should be stayed till after the debate which he was to bring on in the Commons. It was all-important that that debate should take place: and the House would refuse the opportunity, if the subject was at the same time in course of inquiry in a Criminal Court.

London Rev., v. p. 184.

Postponement.

1836.

On the 23rd of February, 1836, Mr. Hume, to whom the country owed more than to any other man in regard to the exposure and annihilation of this great conspiracy, made a complete revelation of the whole matter, ending with a tremendous resolution. This resolution declared the abhorrence of Parliament of all such secret political associations, and proposed an address to the King, requesting him to cause the discharge of all Orangemen, and members of any other secret political associations, from all offices, civil and military, unless they should retire from such societies within one month from the publication of a proclamation to that effect.—Lord John Russell, in a speech of as much prudence as manliness, proposed a somewhat milder proceeding; an address to the King, praying that his Majesty would take such measures as should be effectual for the suppression of the societies in question. The Orangemen in the House were prudent, and offered no opposition. Lord John Russell's resolution was unanimously agreed to. Two days afterwards, the royal reply, echoing the resolution, was received. The Home Secretary transmitted a copy of it to the Duke of Cumberland, as Grand Master of the Orange association. The Duke of Cumberland immediately sent a reply,

Hansard, xxxi. 810.

Hansard, xxxi. 832.

Address to the King.

Reply.

Hansard, xxxi. 870.

Annual Register, 1836, p. 19.

1835.

Dissolution of Orangeism.

intimating that, before the last debate in the Commons, he had recommended the dissolution of Orange Societies in Ireland, and that he would immediately proceed to dissolve all such societies elsewhere. In a few days, the thing was done; and Orangeism became a matter of history.

The quietness with which it was done at last is one of the most striking features of the case. The prudence of all parties now appears something unsurpassed in our history. It is the strongest possible evidence of the universal sense of danger in the leaders of all parties. The Orange chiefs had at last become aware of what they had subjected themselves to. Yet their forces were so great—their physical force, restrained by no principle, no knowledge, and no sense, on the part of the chiefs—that it was not safe to drive them to resentment or despair: and the government had also to consider Ireland, and the supreme importance of leaving a fair field there for trial of their new policy of conciliation under Lord Mulgrave and his coadjutors. The Radical reformers in Parliament felt this as strongly as the Ministers. The great point of the dissolution of Orange Societies was gained; and the chiefs of the Radical Reform party contented themselves with holding out emphatic warnings to the humbled conspirators whom they held in their power. They let these revolutionary Peers know that there were rumours afloat of the reconstitution of Orangeism under another name; that the Orangemen were watched; that the evidence against the leaders was held in readiness for use; that the law which had transported the Dorsetshire labourers could any day be brought to bear upon them; and that no mercy was to be expected if the public safety should require it to be put in operation.

As for the people at large—the greatness of the affair was little understood among them, from the quietness with which it was brought to a close. A multitude scarcely heard of it, except as of the ordinary party conflicts of the day. Many more did not, and could not, fully believe what was before their eyes. It was like a story of a long-past century; and now, such persons look upon it, when the facts are revived, as at a new disclosure which fills them with wonder. There were enough, however, sensible and awake to what the kingdom had escaped to understand the comparative smoothness with which affairs proceeded henceforth in the House of Lords, the sudden silence about reform of that House, and the intense satisfaction with which the departure of the Duke of Cumberland was witnessed, when, in the next year, the accession of a female sovereign to the throne of England sent him away to be King of Hanover.

CHAPTER VI.

1835—40.

Ireland, from 1835—1840.

IT is natural to shrink from the task now before us, of contemplating Ireland at the commencement and during the term of Lord Mulgrave's (presently Lord Normanby's) administration. It is natural now to turn away in heart-sickness when the records under the eye bring up again the high hopes, and the no less flattering fears, of the time; when the ear catches again the echoes of the strife and tumult of those few years when bigotry was in terror or despair, when the oppressed were uttering blessings, and the advent of hope was like the awakening of the thousand voices of the Spring after wintry tempests were gone, and when the loud, clear master-tone of justice made itself heard over all. It is natural to recoil from the thought of that critical period, when all, of every party, believed that a new age had set in for Ireland, and that she was henceforth to grow into the likeness of England, from century to century. Under the hourly pressing sense of what Ireland is now—under the bitter and humbling disappointment of all hopes, and the visitation of new fears which are but too like despair—it is natural to look into the past with shrinking and pain. But there is something in the spirit of History as cordial and cheering under passages of humiliation and disappointment as there is admonitory and chastening in times of hope and triumph. Stern as is the spirit of History in rebuking presumption, and showing up the worthless character of transient victories, and pointing out the inevitable recurrence of human passion and folly, in high places and in low, with all the mournful consequences of such frailty—exactly in the same proportion is she genial and consoling in an adverse season—pointing out the good that underlies all evil, shedding hope upon the most ghastly perplexities, and cheerfully teaching us how to store up all our past experience as material for a deeper knowledge and a wiser action than we were qualified for in our time of highest confidence. As a matter of curiosity or recreation, no one would revert to Ireland, between the years 1835 and 1840: but when, in the course of historical survey, it becomes necessary to contemplate this province of our experience, it is found that far healthier and happier feelings arise to succeed and modify those of disappointment and distress. It is true that we look back upon the wisest and most earnest men then active in that field as upon children planting and watering, and setting their gardens to rights in a new burst of sunshine, while we, from the summit of futurity, perceive how the water-spout is hurrying on which is to tear up every thing, and leave all waste: but we see also that the more complete is the waste, the more thorough will be the renovation; and that perhaps the giddy and wrangling children may come back to their work with a better knowledge, and a more rational expectation.

When it appeared that Catholic Emancipation had not tranquillized Ireland, the opponents of that Emancipation were occupied with their triumph, and with their preparations to keep down the Catholics by all means, political and social, yet left in their power: but the advocates of the Emancipation were driven to consider why it was that the measure appeared to have done so little.

Various Theories.

Presently might be seen a number of men, and of sets of men, each of whom had an idea about the true Irish woe and its remedy. There was much truth in almost every one of these ideas; and great wisdom and virtue in many of the men who acted upon them. But none of them had got to the bottom of the matter: and of the very few men in the kingdom who had insight into the real state of the case, there appears to have been no one who dared openly and emphatically to speak his thought.

Religious Rancour.

Some thought that Ireland could never prosper while religious rancour prevailed as it did; and that all would be well if this rancour could be gradually discharged from the Irish mind. These advocated the extinction of Tithe, the reduction of the Church, the impartial distribution of office among Catholics and Protestants, the discountenance of Orangeism, and the establishment of the government plan of National Education. There was weighty truth in all this: but when its advocates looked for the redemption of Ireland by these means, they were wrong.

Distrust of Law.

Some thought that the fatal mischief was the distrust and dislike of the Law among the Irish people; and these believed the true remedy to lie in winning over O'Connell from his pernicious teachings of illegality and chicanery; and in appointing a Viceroy and staff of officials, whose first care should be to administer with the strictest justice the ordinary powers of the law; who should reform the justiciary of all Ireland, and institute that practical education in simple legality in which the Irish people were conspicuously deficient. There was weighty truth in this: but when its advocates looked to such a policy for the redemption of Ireland, they were wrong.

Principle of Government.

Some dwelt on the undisputed difference between the Irish and the English character; and especially on the constitutional tendency to illegality which they believed they recognised in the Celtic race; and urged that the true method of governing the Irish was not by the English method, but by an affectionate despotism. They pointed to O'Connell, as the virtual sovereign of Ireland, and asked what might not be hoped from sending over a popular Viceroy, whose love of the Irish should make his relation to them that of a chieftain to his retainers; whose empire, in short, should be like that of O'Connell in kind, while the safeguards of sincerity and honour should be added to the popular qualifications of the great demagogue. There might be much truth in this, valuable if urged antecedently to the annexation of Ireland, but of no practical avail towards her immediate redemption.

Political Corruption.

Some believed gross political corruption to be the chief curse; and proposed a registration of voters as a means for the discouragement of political profligacy. The men of this one idea pursued it with such energy as to show that they really did expect, from the restriction and regulation, and ascertainment of the franchise, the redemption of Ireland.

Municipal Deterioration.

Others believed that political principle and knowledge were to be obtained only through political training; and that the reform of municipal institutions was even more important for Ireland than for England and Scotland. They dwelt upon the great truths involved in the recommendation of municipal over central government; and quoted De Tocqueville, where he says, as if he were describing the Irish people, "In certain countries of Europe the natives consider themselves as a kind of settlers:—the greatest changes are effected without their concurrence, and without their knowledge; nay, more, the citizen is unconcerned as to the condition of his village, the police of his street, the repairs of the church, or of the parsonage; for he looks upon all these things as unconnected with himself, and as the property of a powerful stranger whom he calls the government. He has only a life interest in these possessions, and he entertains no notions of ownership or of improvement. This want of interest in his own affairs goes so far, that if his own safety or that of his children is endangered, instead of trying to avert the peril, he will fold his arms, and wait till the nation comes to his assistance. This same individual, who has so completely sacrificed his own free-will, had no natural propensity to obedience; he cowers, it is true, before the pettiest officer; but he braves the law with the spirit of a conquered foe, as soon as its superior force is removed: his oscillations between servitude and license are perpetual. When a nation has arrived at this state, it must either change its customs and its laws, or perish: the source of public virtue is dry; and though it may contain subjects, the race of citizens is extinct."—"How can a populace, unaccustomed to freedom in small concerns, learn to use it temperately in great affairs? What resistance can be offered to tyranny in a country where every private individual is impotent, and where the citizens are united by no common tie? Those who dread the license of the mob, and those who fear the rule of absolute power, ought alike to desire the progressive growth of provincial liberties."—"Local assemblies of citizens constitute the strength of free nations. Town meetings are to liberty what primary schools are to science: they bring it within the people's reach; they teach men how to use and enjoy it. A nation may establish a system of free government; but without the spirit of municipal institutions it cannot have the spirit of liberty."—"Here," said the advocates of Municipal Reform in Ireland—"here we have before us the straight road to the redemption of Ireland. Every one knows that her natural resources are abundant for the wants of her inhabitants, if only her inhabitants knew how to use them. This is the way to teach them:—this is the way to call out and increase such public virtue as exists. It is not by an affectionate despotism, but by a training to self-government, that the Irish must be redeemed. Their own affectionate despot himself says, that purified municipal institutions will become 'normal schools of peaceful agitation:' we shall find them normal schools of political and social intelligence and virtue; and by them Ireland may at last be redeemed." In this faith—to a considerable extent justifiable—the advocates of Municipal reform worked diligently for the five years which ran their course between the introduction of the question and the passage of the mutilated Bill for Irish Corporate Reform. There was weighty truth in their doctrine; but when they looked for the redemption of Ireland by this means, they were wrong.

Democracy in America, i. p. 126.

Vol. i. p. 132.

Vol. i. p. 73.

UNCERTAINTY OF SUBSISTENCE.

Others saw a necessity underlying even the deepest that have been pointed out: and they thought it might be met by giving every man in Ireland a right to subsistence. The uncertainty of food, and consequent recklessness of temper and habits among the labouring classes; the carelessness or rapacity of bad

1835—40. landlords; the unprofitable management of the land; the depraving prevalence of mendicity, and almost all the worst evils of life in Ireland, might, it was said, be met, and in time corrected, by a good Poor Law. This was the one great measure which would operate beneficially in all directions—would feed the hungry, and clothe the naked, and settle the roving, and restrain the encroaching, and employ the idle;—would bring the unscrupulous landowner to reflection and retribution, enable the good occupier to understand and control his own position—and would, in short, establish natural relations throughout the disorganized society of Ireland. There was weighty truth in all this; so much truth, and held by so many of the best minds among philosophers, statesmen, and men of business, that few dared to qualify the general expectation excited by their confidence: but there were persons who felt and said at the time that all who looked for the redemption of Ireland through an extension of the English Poor Law were wrong.

Who, then, were right? Among these many who were wrong, was there no one right? It is surely not to be expected that any one should be wholly right. The proof of the insufficiency of any or all of the above-mentioned theories was not yet extant. The materials for a right judgment were scattered abroad:—one person here and another there obtained a glimpse of true insight; and some declared what they thought and saw. It was a common thing to be told that "the land" was at the bottom of the Irish difficulty: but this might mean, and did mean, several different things. It might mean any one of a dozen prevalent vices and faults in the tenure, or distribution, or cultivation of land; or in the social circumstances which gave land a peculiar value in Ireland. Those who came nearest to the truth, consciously or unconsciously, were perhaps the lawyers, who told a friend, here and there, in an undertone by the fireside, that there was not a title to land in Ireland that would bear looking into; that this was a secret known to all who were concerned in it; that it was the true reason of the opposition to a registry of deeds; the sorest impediment to improvement; the natural cause of the singular recklessness of Irish landlords; the sufficient explanation of the silence and apparent apathy of mortgagees and others concerned in the enriching of estates, about all methods of improvement and convenience; and a powerful instigation to men of various classes to take the law into their own hands, and to nourish those social feuds which might strengthen and protract the local dominion of men, whose title to their land was, or might be found, insecure.

Fundamental Difficulty.

Insecurity of title to Land.

The greater part of Irish landed property had been granted three times over, at least, during the long sequence of troubles in that unhappy country. The descendants of old Irish chieftains still looked on those estates as properly their own which had been the homes of their fathers; and the posterity of all other dispossessed parties looked on with the same jealous eyes. As for those in actual possession, too many of them conducted themselves and their property in the way which has made the Irish landlord a bye-word and reproach. The virtuous administration of their estates was not to such the great duty and object in life that it is usually seen to be in countries where the property is secure, as a matter of course; where the tenantry and labourers are regarded by the proprietor as persons to whom he owes serious duties; and where the improvement of the estate for the benefit of heirs is the first consideration in connexion with it. Such is the natural state of things (however set aside in special cases by the vices of bad landlords) under the main condition of security of property. The opposite state of affairs was that which naturally appeared in Ireland. The sole object too often was to make the most of the present time, leaving the future to take care of itself. The smallness of the proprietary body is in itself a serious and portentous evil in Ireland, where the number of holders of land in fee is said not to exceed 8,000. The very large estates held by these few persons sink lower in productiveness, in proportion to the lapse of time which, instead of giving security, reveals embarrassments which are evidently insurmountable. Instead of investing capital in the land, for its improvement, the proprietors had split it into small freeholds, before the disfranchisement of "the Forties;" and the system was not changed after that disfranchisement, because more immediate profit was supposed obtainable from the high rents promised by the numerous tenantry than by improved cultivation. A proprietor, doubtful whether he could sell his land, on account of its questionable title, embarrassed by settlements and mortgages, hopeless of freeing the estate by any effort of his own, naturally does as his father did before him, and as he supposes his son will do after him—he gets what he can from year to year, and hopes the sky will not fall in his time. The insecurity extends to the tenantry, who are more numerous than the unimproved land can support. They got their land by bidding against each other: and they know that they cannot have it long—having promised rents which they cannot pay; so they snatch what they can from the ground and from fate, and make themselves as comfortable as they can till the sky falls.—Such was the state of things, and the cause of that state, known to a few before the experiment of impartial government was tried in Ireland: and if only it had been more widely and thoroughly understood, it seems impossible that men should have expected so much as they did from reforms which did not touch the radical evil—the insecurity of landed property in Ireland. As we shall see, the remedies referred to above were all tried; and there is no need to inform any reader that Ireland is not yet redeemed.

Condition and Prospects of Ireland, p. 239.

Impartiality to Sects.

1. First: various efforts were made to abate the religious rancour of Irish society. That little could be done through the reduction of the Church and the commutation of tithe, has been shown. We have seen how hard and protracted was the labour of getting anything done about tithe—owing to the very rancour which it was the great object to moderate. We have seen something too of the annihilation of Orangeism, as an organization: but it would occupy a volume to tell all that happened between the Irish government and the Orangemen before the Royal Grand Master dissolved the association. The avowed principle of Lord Mulgrave's government was impartiality; and it appears to have been firmly adhered to: but so unused was Ireland to impartiality in the government, that both Protestants and Catholics interpreted the acts of the Viceroy as favour to the Catholics. Investigation was made into the condition of Ribbandism, against which the Protestants declared themselves obliged to organize their Orangeism in self-defence: and, to the surprise of the government no less than others, it was found that scarcely any thing but the name existed. Frequently as the world had been, and still was, alarmed by intimations in the newspapers of dreadful Ribband plots, they

Ribbandmen and Orangemen.

1835—40. were found, on the most searching inquiry, to be mere bugbears. As there was nothing to lay hold of, government could do no more than proscribe Ribbandism with all other secret societies, while it was compelled to inflict open shame upon Orangeism. The Orangemen began their demonstrations early after the arrival of Lord Mulgrave. In consequence of the Recorder of Dublin having denounced the Melbourne administration as "infidels in religion," a public meeting was called in Dublin, to consider of this libel; and Orangemen attended in large bodies—a fight being, as usual, the close of the business. In consequence of a government prohibition of Orange processions in the North, a pamphlet was widely circulated which called on Orangemen to break the law, because government did not punish such breaches of the law as the swarming of Jesuits through the land, and the rearing of the unhallowed heads of monasteries. When the Viceroy had returned from his southern journey, and was about to set out for the North, the Orangemen of Londonderry threatened him through the newspapers with even personal violence. "If he should come among us, he shall see such a display of Orange banners as shall put him into the horrors." They would take care to give such notice of his approach as should secure him a reception which he had better not encounter; and so forth. While the Viceroy was thus threatened by one party, and affectionately hailed by the other, it was difficult to keep the public mind fixed on the ruling government principle of impartiality.—At the same time, intimation was officially given throughout the constabulary force that a sub-constable in Wexford had been dismissed on proof of his having attended an Orange Lodge; and a drum-major was tried by Court Martial, and reduced to the ranks, for having played party tunes in the streets of Belfast.—The Viceroy disallowed the election of the Master of an Orange Lodge to the Mayoralty of Cork, and of two other Orangemen as Sheriffs, in September, 1835. These instances looked like partiality while no Ribbandmen were dismissed or otherwise punished. If Ribbandmen could have been found, in office or out of it, they would have been punished: but all endeavours to detect and punish Ribbandism were in vain. A Catholic policeman endeavoured to join, in order to obtain information: and an inspector of police was sent to England to learn from an Irish soldier in a place of safety what he would not have told among his acquaintances at home: but all that could be discovered by all the powers of government and the police in five years, supplied ground for only one prosecution; and that broke down. Thus, all the penalties devolved on one party; but it could not be said that that party met only with severity. As soon as the intention of the leaders to dissolve the Orange Societies was known, the Viceroy liberated all the Orangemen who were under arrest for joining prohibited party processions on the 12th July preceding

'A Voice from the North.'

Londonderry Sentinel, Sep. 1835.

The Irish Orangemen were, however, less obedient to their chiefs than the English and Scotch. The Dublin Grand Committee met and decided that "the mere will of the King was not law," and that their watchword should be "no surrender." Sir Harcourt Lees addressed a letter to the brethren, the last paragraph of which was adopted as the Tory text or watchword from that day forward:—"Orangemen—increase and multiply—be tranquil—be vigilant. Put your trust in God—still revere your King—and keep your powder dry."

This letter was dated February 27th, 1836. On the 7th of April following, the Orange idol was rent to pieces in its shrine; the statue of William III. was blown up on its pedestal in College Green, Dublin. Here was a Catholic outrage—an act of Ribband sedition at last. But almost before this was said, men began to smell some of the "dry powder" above referred to in the train which blew up the statue. Government offered a large reward for the detection of the offender; and the Dublin Corporation offered as much again. The perpetrator was never discovered; but some incidents of the time caused a general impression that the hand employed was that of a wrathful Orangeman.

Spectator, 1836, p. 364.

Meantime, the Viceroy and his coadjutors in the government persevered in bestowing office without regard to religious persuasion. They selected the fittest men; and if they inquired whether they were Protestant or Catholic, it was for the purpose of holding the balance as even as they could. The practice of setting aside Roman Catholics as jurors was broken through; and throughout the island, the Protestants, who had always regarded their neighbours of another faith as idolators and rebels, saw with amazement and horror that they were trusted to try the accused, to administer the laws, and transact the business of society, as freely as if they hated the Pope and cursed the Jesuists.

CATHOLICS IN THE JURY BOX.

All this was very well: but a more effectual method of ultimately extinguishing religious rancour was supposed to be by the system of National Education established in Ireland.

In October, 1831, the first announcement of this scheme was made in a letter from the then Secretary for Ireland, Mr. Stanley, to the Duke of Leinster. The object was not new—the object of diminishing the violence of religious animosities by bringing together the children of Catholic and Protestant daily—to sit on the same bench, take an interest in the same ideas, and find by constant experience and sympathy how much they had in common. This object had been aimed at through the organization of the Kildare Street schools; but the machinery was not of the right kind, though conscientiously worked.—In 1828, a Committee of the House of Commons had recommended the adoption of a system "which should afford, if possible, a combined literary, and separate religious education, and should be capable of being so far adapted to the views of the religious persuasions which prevail in Ireland as to render it, in truth, a system of national education for the poorer classes of the community." In order to meet the religious wants and wishes of all parties, certain days in each week were set apart for the religious instruction of the children by their respective clergy; and every encouragement was given to the communication of such instruction daily, before and after school hours. The great difficulty was about the method of giving any religious sanction to the secular teaching in the schools. All desired some such sanction: but the Protestants contended for the whole Bible, spurning the idea of selections being made from it for school reading, as the rankest blasphemy, while the Catholics are not, as every one knows, allowed the free use of the Scriptures. Selections from the Bible were made, to the satisfaction of many clergy, both Protestant and Catholic: and these have been in use to this day. A brief remark dropped by the Archbishop of Dublin in the

NATIONAL EDUCATION.

debate (February 28th, 1837) on the appointment of a Committee of Inquiry into the Irish School system, conveyed a significant hint and warning to those who heard him, and to many out of doors—that nothing could be more perilous than to circulate among the people exaggerated notions of the differences between the several versions of the records of their salvation. Yet, from the Bishop of Exeter in the Lords down to the idlest clergyman without a flock in Ireland, the opposition to the Education Board and its acts, on the ground of the mutilation of the Scriptures, was virulent to a degree incredible in men who call themselves Christians. They could not, however, overthrow the Board, or stop its good works. They could not even hinder Protestants in Ireland from accepting the benefit of the schools, though hundreds and thousands of children were kept away, to be lost in ignorance and superstition, who would otherwise have been rational and enlightened citizens of a country whose main want is of good citizens. The Archbishop of Dublin said, on this 28th of February, 1837, that "he had ascertained, by examination, that in these schools," (in a particular district,) "extending to between 300 and 400, in which it was said there were no Protestants, that about 22,000 Roman Catholic children and 16,000 Protestants had been educated." In the face of every kind of opposition, even of atrocious slanders without any foundation whatever, slanders such as bigotry in religion and party spirit in politics could alone generate, the National School system in Ireland continued to expand and flourish during the whole period of the Melbourne administration, tending to humanize every district where it was planted, and preparing, as it was fondly hoped, a brightening prospect of social peace for a future generation. During the eight years from the establishment of the system to the going out of the Whig administration in 1841, we find an annual advance in the number of schools and scholars, in an accelerating ratio, till, since 1834, the number of schools in operation had increased from 789 to 2,337, and the number of scholars from 107,042 to 281,849. And the Board was then about to aid 382 additional schools, which would add 48,000 to the number of pupils on the rolls.—When hundreds of thousands of children were thus reared in security from sectarian rancour, it seemed to many that such rancour might, and must in time, be discharged from the mind of the Irish people: but, good as was the work, and bright as were the hopes which it yielded, it is not the less clear that those were wrong who looked to this institution for the redemption of Ireland.

Hansard, xxxvi. 1144.

Hansard, xxxvi. 1142.

Progress of the Nation, Sec. vii. ch. 4.

Impartiality of Law.

2. Next, we must glance at the policy desired by those who would have won over O'Connell from his practice of teaching dislike and distrust of the law, believing this dislike and distrust of the law to be the one impediment to the redemption of the Irish people. At the same time that O'Connell was won over to silence, the Irish government was to rule conspicuously by the ordinary powers of the law, to exercise the strictest impartiality, and to compel a similar recognition of equality before the law throughout the country, by a reform of the justiciary.

The characterizing virtue of Lord Mulgrave's administration in Ireland was its reliance on the ordinary powers of the law, and the impartial exercise of them. Extreme as was the consternation of the Church and Tory portion of Irish society at seeing Catholic gentlemen admitted to the magistracy, and

1835—40.

Protestant Petition, Jan. 1837.

Catholic lawyers to office in Dublin, and Catholic juries sitting to try offenders, either Protestant or Catholic, and loud as was the outcry about the return of the times of James II., and the domination of the Pope in Ireland, the improvement in social life, and the decrease of crime, soon became unquestionable facts. It was an affecting sight to those who happened to be in Ireland in 1837, to see the awakening of the Catholic population to a sense of what law and justice were, and to a hope that they might share in the benefit. The Catholic priesthood led the way in trusting the government; and the people followed. It was a touching sight—that of the melting down of the popular spirit of pride and cunning into gratitude and trust. Hitherto, the pride of the Irish peasant had nourished itself in defiance first, and then evasion of the law, as in defiance and circumvention of an enemy. The chief ground of the popular admiration of O'Connell was his success in defying and evading the law; and every follower of the Agitator gloried in emulating him, as far as opportunity allowed. Now, for the first time, the idea dawned upon the general Irish mind, that law and justice might possibly be a benefit, and not an oppression: and when, fostered by the priests, and justified by the whole course of the government, this idea grew clear and strong, the revulsion of feeling was a truly affecting sight. Criminals became odious, instead of endeared, by their crimes; they were informed against, instead of harboured; and the fiercest wrong-doers felt ashamed of outrages against the public peace, instead of glorying in them. If the cause of Irish misery had not lain deeper than was then dreamed of—if all collateral improvements had not been swept away through the absence of the only effectual remedy—the training of the Catholic Irish to legality and order in Lord Mulgrave's time might have proved their permanent redemption from one of their worst national faults. As it was, the remarkable and steady subsidence of crime, during the whole term of the Whig administration in Ireland, is a sufficient testimony to the wisdom and humanity of the characterizing principle of its rule.

Irish Crime Committee. Evidence, 1838

DECREASE OF CRIME.

Sir R. Peel reminded parliament, in 1829, that "for scarcely one year during the period that has elapsed since the Union, has Ireland been governed by the ordinary course of law." Insurrection Acts, Suspension of the Habeas Corpus, and Martial Law, were all familiarly associated in men's minds with the very name of Ireland: and all had been in vain;—so vain, that parliament itself became uneasy and remorseful; and Lord Grey's government fell on the question of a Coercion Bill. Now, for a term of years, the experiment was tried of putting the ordinary law in force without fear or favour; and the result was, that at the close of the Viceroy's term of government, twenty-seven out of thirty-two counties in Ireland were perfectly tranquil, or eminently tranquillized, while the remaining five were not worse than they had always been before: that, while the decrease of crimes proceeded from year to year, the proportion of convictions to committals, and of committals to offences, was always on the increase—showing that at length the people were taking their part in the administration of justice, for the public good; that wherever the influence and example of the government could act freely, crime had almost disappeared—as in the instance of the celebrated faction-fights, which were now seldom heard of; while the crimes which did continue were those which arose from agrarian discontents—from that great underlying grievance which every government has left untouched: and finally, that the decrease of crime, on comparison of the three years ending in 1838 with the three years ending in 1828, was no less than 10 per cent. of murder and manslaughter—46 per cent. of shooting and stabbing—29 per cent. of conspiracy to murder—56 per cent. of burglary, and 86 per cent. of housebreaking for arms in the night.

The Viceroy's Clemency.

The alarmed Protestants in parliament, however, complained that Lord Mulgrave desecrated and annulled the law by his clemency. He had made a circuit through the south first, and then through the north of Ireland, and had visited the jails, and most establishments supported by the public funds. In visiting the jails, he had inquired of three parties concerning the prisoners whose pardon might be desirable;—of the resident officers about their conduct in prison; of the medical officers about their health; and of neighbouring gentlemen about their previous character, and the probability of their good conduct henceforth. Where necessary, application was made to the judges for guidance. Of 800 petitions for pardon, about half had been entertained: of these, only 100 had been favourably answered, on certificates from medical men and others. These (whatever had been said to the contrary) were Protestants or Catholics, as might happen; while the rest, the only class to whom the prison-doors had been thrown open freely, were Orangemen convicted of joining illegal processions. The small proportion of re-commitments among the offenders thus pardoned testified to the discretion of the mercy which had released them at the commencement of a new period in the government of Ireland; yet the political Protestants, perplexed and dismayed by the new doctrine and practice of equity before the law, persisted in calling the Viceroy's journeys of inspection "jail-delivery circuits," and concluded that pardon was granted for the sake of the Catholics.

Hansard, xxxvi. 340.

There was another doctrine, propounded by a member of the government at this time, which was offensive to the political "Protestants," as they called themselves, who opposed the acts of the Mulgrave administration. There is no survivor of that administration who will not eagerly assent to the avowal, that that one member, Mr. Drummond, was the mind and soul of it. Mr. Drummond, the military surveyor, the discoverer of the light known by his name, the private secretary of Lord Althorp, by the united wish of Lord Grey's cabinet, and the Irish Under Secretary under Lords Mulgrave and Morpeth, was a man of great external calmness, of eminent prudence in the ordinary affairs of life, and, till of late years, apparently devoted altogether to scientific pursuits. His acquaintances were wont to rally him for his Scotch prudence and caution, and to describe the pleasures and pains of enthusiasm to him, as things that he could not possibly know any thing about. It was his function in Ireland which revealed him to his friends, if not to himself. His subdued enthusiasm now manifested itself in a moral force, as lofty and sustained as it was powerful. The cool man of science came out the philanthropist, the philosopher, the statesman, the virtual preacher—carrying the loftiest spirit of devotedness into each function. He put wisdom into the counsels of the Irish government, and moderation into its demeanour. He put enthusiasm into the justice which he gave impartially to the Irish people; and he called for justice in the enthusiasms which the observant people paid back to the government. It was he who repressed crime throughout the nation, and rebuked its

Thomas Drummond.

passions, and stilled its turbulence, and encouraged its hopes, and stimulated its industry, and soothed its sorrows. His sobriety of judgment and calmness of manner never gave way; but a fervour, like that of renewed youth, latterly pervaded his whole mind, animated all his faculties, and deepened his habitual composure, while he was consciously meeting the martyr's doom. He lived too fast, knowingly and willingly, during these few years which he believed to be so critical for Ireland. Under his work, his responsibilities, his thronging ideas, his working emotions, his frame could not hold out long: and he was prostrated at once by an attack of illness in the spring of 1840. "I am dying for Ireland," he said, just at the last. He died for Ireland; and in the contemplation of his death, how do other deaths which bear more of the external marks of martyrdom for Ireland shrink, by comparison, in our estimate! Here was no passion—no insulting speech—no underhand or defiant action—no collision of duties—no forfeiture of good faith—no implication of the helpless in danger—no disturbance of society—no imperilling of any life but his own. No man who courted the bullet or the gibbet ever dared more. No man who organized rebellion in consultations by day and drillings at night ever wrought harder. No man who cast his all into the revolutionary balance was ever more disinterested and devoted. He, a soldier of a sensitive spirit, brought upon himself unmeasured insult, which would elsewhere have been intolerable: but for Ireland's sake he bore it all. He went through endless toils which nobody knew of, who could give him any return of honour. He felt himself sinking, before he had attained the rewards which might once have been alluring to him—before he had attained wealth, or rank, or a post in the world's eye, or the fame of statesmanship: but he toiled on, too busy on Ireland's behalf to have a regret to spare for such things as these. If there are any who cannot reconcile themselves to such an issue, let them remember how noble a way remains to do him honour. Let them name his name when Ireland wants his example. When boasts of martyrdom abound, and blustering patriots would rouse the ignorant and suffering to rash enterprises, and men who will not work for Ireland talk of fighting for her, and those who cannot deny their own vanity, or indolence, or worldly care, claim the glory of patriotic agitation, let the name of Thomas Drummond be quietly spoken, and human nature has lost its rectitude and its sensibility if the arrogance be not shamed, and the vaunt silenced.

He was a man whom few things could astonish. One of the few things which did astonish him was the effect of certain words of his own which appeared to him as simple and commonplace as anything he ever uttered. It is certainly true, however, that the most commonplace sayings have an effect proportioned to the moral force of those who utter them: and in this case the words appear—even now, to us—instinct with the just and brave spirit of the man. The story was this. In the course of the debate in the Upper House on Lord Roden's motion, towards the close of 1837, it was mentioned by Lord Mulgrave (then become Marquess of Normanby) and by other speakers on the same side, that all inquiry led to the conclusion that the murders and manslaughter in Ireland were not owing to religious differences or political discontents, but almost exclusively to agrarian grievances. This opinion, far from acceptable to listening Orangemen and Irish landlords, was vehemently pro-

Hansard, xxxix. 262-3.

tested against, not only by Lord Roden, but by the Duke of Wellington, who quoted the Marquess Wellesley as an indisputable authority, who had said that the agrarian disturbances themselves were ascribable to political agitation. From that time, the Irish landlords and political chiefs on the Tory side seem to have taken for granted that the government was a company of declared foes, who would keep watch on the management of their private affairs, and cast upon them the responsibility of all outrages perpetrated on Irish estates.—On the 1st of January, 1839, Lord Norbury was shot in his own shrubbery, in broad daylight, while pointing out to his steward some trees which he destined for removal. The cause of the deed was shrouded in mystery. Lord Norbury was on good terms with his Catholic neighbours and tenants; and he did not concern himself about politics. The question was naturally asked by everybody whether this was another agrarian outrage. The very words fired the passions of the landlords—before jealous, and now panic-stricken. At a meeting which they held, in the name of the magistrates of King's County at Tullamore, to consider the circumstances of this murder and of the country, they reverted to those few words of Mr. Drummond's which their vehement wrath at once raised into a proverb. These words were found in a letter of Mr. Drummond's, in reply to a request from the magistrates of Tipperary for an increase of military or police force. The Under-Secretary refused the assistance requested, and gave reasons which induced the receivers of the letter to keep it secret, lest the common people should hear about it, "and be led to think ill of the landlords." The letter was asked for in Parliament, however, and necessarily produced; and it actually became a parliamentary document before the magistrates of Tipperary had been generally permitted to see it. In this much-canvassed letter occurred the words "Property has its duties as well as its rights." In their fear and grief at the murder of Lord Norbury, possibly through some discontent among his tenantry (though he was a kind landlord), the King's County magistrates reverted to Mr. Drummond's proposition, as a subject on which to vent their passion; and it shows how wild and desperate must have been their wrath that they could fall out with a proposition so simply indisputable. It was declared that in that letter, the Tipperary magistrates were "bearded and insulted" by Mr. Drummond. A resolution was carried without a division, "that it appears to this meeting that the answer conveyed to the magistrates of Tipperary from Mr. Under-Secretary Drummond has had the unfortunate effect of increasing the animosities entertained against the owners of the soil by the occupants, who now constitute themselves the sole arbiters of the rights as well as the duties of property." Lord Charleville ventured to declare, in moving this resolution, that the saying about property having duties as well as rights, though innocent enough in itself, was felt to be little less than a deliberate and unfeeling insult in the circumstances under which it was offered. When the plainest truths of morals are felt to be personal insults, all men see how the matter stands; and all men know that those plain truths are then made vital. And so it was in this case. The Tory landlords of Ireland have never forgotten that property has its duties as well as its rights. But the annunciation of this truth was fatal to all perception on their part of the impartiality of government rule.

Spectator, 1839, p. 54.

His Maxim.

One instance of the impartiality—of the want of respect of persons—exasperated the "ascendancy" leaders extremely. It was not only poor men—sub-constables and the like—who were dismissed from the government service for Orangeism, but great men also, with equal speed and certainty. Colonel Verner, who represented the Orangemen of the empire in the Commons, during the investigation of the Fairman plot, gave at an election dinner, as a party toast, "the battle of the Diamond." Mr. Drummond wrote to inquire whether it could be possible that Colonel Verner was thus a party to the commemoration of a lawless and disgraceful conflict. Colonel Verner's reply first supposed that he could not be expected to condescend to reply, and requested that any future question which the Secretary might be desired to ask, should "be expressed in terms better qualified to invite an answer:" and then refused to answer the inquiry at all. The Chief Secretary, Lord Morpeth, now wrote himself, and, assigning reasons at length for the step taken by the government, signified to Colonel Verner his removal from the commission of the peace, and from the office of Deputy-Lieutenant of the county of Tyrone. Colonel Verner brought the matter before Parliament, and thereby did an unintentional service to the government by publishing, in the most effectual manner, the evidence of its principles and methods of rule. Among the ignorant and passionate poor, meantime, the repressive and equalizing rule of the government was extending, without its being felt as pressure. The police force of Dublin, and the constabulary throughout the country, were renovated and organized till they became as fine a body of police as exists in any country. Where the justices could not be relied on for repressing political demonstrations, stipendiary magistrates were planted, to direct the constabulary: and the quiet which followed surprised even the authors of it. Many causes of breach of the law were removed by the Tithe Act, and by new provisions and arrangements in relation to the collection of rents and the serving of the processes of the inferior local courts. Collisions between the people and rent-collectors and process-servers were thus almost entirely obviated.—But provision was at the same time made for the more certain and effectual punishment of all who still offended. Government undertook the prosecution of several classes of offences which before must be pursued by private parties, who might be accessible to fear or favour. Crown prosecutors appeared at the Quarter Sessions—one for each county—and obtained convictions for a great number of offences which would otherwise, though well known, have gone unpunished—to the disgrace of justice, and the demoralization of the people. Witnesses were protected by government, before and after the trials, and publicly recognised as citizens who were doing their duty to society. By a steady use of these methods, more was done to enlighten the Irish as to the true function of law, and to convince them of its being a blessing to every man of them all, than could have been supposed possible in so short a term of years. But the underlying mischief was not removed nor touched; and those who looked to the admirable administration of law and justice by Lord Normanby's government for the redemption of Ireland were wrong.

Hansard, xxxix. 635.

Reform of Constabulary.

Of Magistracy.

Prevention of Crime.

Repression of Crime.

3. The idea that an affectionate despotism—a government by apostles—is the only government that will suit the Irish people, unfit as they are thought to have shown themselves for a share in a representative system, seems almost

Government by Functionaries or by Apostles.

too romantic and unpractical for an express mention in our age. But it happens, curiously enough, that we have evidence before our eyes that, suitable as a government by apostles may be to the Irish mind and temper, it could not avail for the redemption of the country. There has been no want of apostles or of idols in our own time; and little permanent good has accrued from the action of the very best. Lord Normanby and his coadjutors were truly apostles, on a mission of justice and mercy; yet, after how short a course of years were they compelled to avow that their "policy of conciliation was exhausted!" In the latter years of their term, too, they had the advantage of speaking in the name of the Queen, who was perfectly idolized throughout the length and breadth of the land. We are assured by those who have explored the repository of Irish songs, and collected the political ballads which abound among the peasantry, that in O'Connell's most triumphant days, his simplest admirers did not dream of his title of king interfering with that of the Queen. Her Majesty, we are told, had a perfect host of volunteer poet laureates; and the publishers of the popular literature declared that the most favourite old national ballads would not sell unless some lines in praise of Victoria were added. In the religious ballads, her Majesty is even more prominent still. The prophecies of this beloved order of poetry, whose tone is prophetic throughout, all point to the restoration of the true Church, and of Irish prosperity in consequence. Always favourites of the Catholic peasantry, from Queen Elizabeth's days to Queen Victoria's, they circulate most diligently in times of discontent and approaching revolt; and they now, for the first time since the Revolution, expressed trust in a lawful ruler. In Elizabeth's days, the retriever was to be the king of Spain; then the O'Neill; then the Stuarts, regnant and exiled: then Dan. O'Connell; and, at the time under our notice, Queen Victoria. She is to build up the old Munster Cathedral, and the Catholic Church generally; and to remedy every evil, great and small, that afflicts humanity in her Irish dominions. And there is, in the eyes of the singers of these ballads, no unreasonableness in expecting such things from "our noble young Queen:" on the contrary, it would be impious to expect less—Victoria being especially watched over by the Virgin, and aided by St. Francis; and having as supporters Lord Mulgrave on the one hand, and Dan. O'Connell on the other. While the Orangemen of the North were striving to outdo every body in protestations of devotion to the Queen, and she was thus adored by the Catholic peasantry of the south, her representative and ministers had no permanent success in their efforts to "tranquillize Ireland."—Nor, as it appears, would they have succeeded better if the great apostle of all had been at the antipodes. In governing by an affectionate despotism, it would always be a difficulty to make sure of having but one despot at a time. O'Connell, however, though he might at any moment interfere with the course of the Mulgrave or any other administration, was not, in fact, at this period interfering with it. For a short time, he left off calling the government "the base, bloody, and brutal Whigs," and mentioned Repeal only now and then, to keep up the government to its business, as he thought. He heard with delighted ears, and repeated with an untiring tongue, the declaration of Lord John Russell, in February, 1837, of the principles which the Whigs consulted in their theory of Irish government,

The Queen.

London and Westminster Review, lxiv. p. 92.

p. 98.

O'Connell.

a declaration which he interpreted as a manifesto in favour of ruling Ireland by an affectionate despotism. "I will take leave," said Lord John Russell, in introducing the Irish Municipal Reform Bill, "to quote the principle of our conduct from the recorded words of a very great man. . . . . . Mr. Fox stated, in a very eloquent speech which he delivered in 1797, the principles upon which he conceived the government of Ireland should be conducted. He stated in his usual frank, it might be said incautious, manner, that he conceived that concessions should be made to the people of Ireland—he said, if he found he had not conceded enough, he would concede more—he said that he thought the only way of governing Ireland was to please the people of Ireland—that he knew no better source of strength to this country—and he declared in one sentence which I will read to the House, his wish with respect to the government of Ireland. 'My wish is,' said Mr. Fox, 'that the whole people of Ireland should have the same principles, the same system, the same operation, of government; and though it may be a subordinate consideration, that all classes should have an equal chance of emolument; in other words, I would have the whole Irish government regulated by Irish notions and Irish prejudices; and I firmly believe, according to another Irish expression, the more she is under Irish government, the more will she be bound to English interests.'" This would have been all very well, if the only danger of antagonism had been between Ireland and England; but the theory was vitiated, fatally, by the antagonism of parties within Ireland herself. However, its enunciation gave sufficient satisfaction to O'Connell to secure his temporary co-operation. He praised the Whigs, dined with the Viceroy, railed at the Opposition in the House of Commons with a coarseness of language and demeanour which confounded the Speaker himself; called upon every peasant in every village to regard himself as a supporter of the government; but withal kept up his General Association—the successor of the Catholic Association—and gave it the name of the Precursor Society, as a broad hint of the Repeal agitation that would follow, if the government fell below his mark.

Hansard, xxxvi. 210.

It was in 1836, when the Lords were throwing out their Municipal Reform Bill, that the organization was restored, for "the rousing of the millions of Ireland," as Mr. Sheil said, "and a development of the might which slumbers in her arm."—"The Association, the old Association, with its millions for its sustainment, is what we want, and what we needs must have again." And they had it, at its old place of meeting, the Corn Exchange, with its old chair, presented to it by O'Connell; its tribute, under the new name of the Justice Rent: its machinery of appeals and of regulation, and of registration, and its old assumption of dictatorial power. It was an affectionate despotism, corroborative for a time of British government, but ready for opposition at any moment. Its change of title from the General to the Precursor Association, was ominous; and it sounded somewhat like a bull when O'Connell, in 1839, at the time of the fiercest parliamentary opposition to the Normanby administration, called upon his "two millions of Precursors," to rally in defence of the Saxon government of the day. How far the mission of the great apostle of all tended to the tranquillization of Ireland, it would be a mere mockery to pretend to point out.

Annual Register, 1836, p. 302.

As if to meet the objection that the failure of such a mission is ascribable to

1835—40. the vices of the apostle, another affectionate despotism, exercised by a blameless apostle, was now extending in Ireland.—In 1829, Ireland spent 6,000,000*l.* on proof-spirits; and there was not a town where men "beastly drunk" with whiskey were not staggering about the streets, ready for a fight on any pretence or none; and not a hamlet in the country where the hovel of the sot might not be seen, bare of comfort and teeming with disease. In the summer of that year, an American gentleman visited a friend at Belfast; and some must have afterwards thought of that blessing on the hospitable, that they "may entertain angels unawares." Dr. Penny from America found his host, Dr. Edgar, of Belfast, meditating the means of securing the better observance of the Sabbath, and a purer social conduct altogether, in the city of his abode. Just before this, all good men in the cities of the United States had taken alarm at the spread of intemperance in their prosperous country, and were glad to embrace any method which might promise even a temporary check. The wisest of them were far from supposing that moral restraint can be effectually and permanently secured by any mechanical organization; and there were many who seriously dreaded the consequences of imposing an artificial check which, if it gave way, would plunge the victim into the worse sin of perjury, and utterly degrade him in his own eyes. If the dispossessed devil should return, he would inevitably bring with him others worse than himself. And the testimony of physicians soon proved but too plainly that there were frequent violations of the pledge, and hopeless relapses into intemperance, now made doubly foul by having become secret and wrapped up in lies. Still, it was so absolutely necessary that something should be done, that the wisest, with trembling tread, followed where the rash rushed in upon the sacred precincts of conscience, and lent a hand to work the machinery by which its free action was to be superseded. They thought they must take their chance with the adults for the sake of the young. They must run the risk of betraying the mature sinner into deeper guilt, to save the rising generation from overpowering temptation. They must shut up the spirit-shops and distilleries, and clear the streets of drunken men, and cleanse the private houses of the smell of rum—they must put the sin and its means and incentives out of sight—out of the reach of every sense, that it might occur as little as possible to any mind, and that children might not be infected into the destruction which had overtaken their fathers. Those who were most clearly sensible of the unsoundness of the principle of societies for individual moral restraint yet dared not refuse to join this movement in a crisis which, to use the words of an American clergyman, "threatened to overthrow society, and humanity itself, in the United States." The work was in progress in that summer when Dr. Penny visited Dr. Edgar at Belfast. From what he heard, Dr. Edgar resolved that his efforts should be made in this direction; and he published his first Appeal on behalf of Temperance Societies, in August, 1829. In the course of a year, four travelling agents dispersed his tracts all over the island. By keeping the subject constantly before the public eye, he caused knowledge, as well as interest, to spring up in every direction; and it was not long before thoughtful men in all parts of Ireland had become aware that four-fifths of the crime brought up for justice, three-fourths of the hopeless beggary, (at that period,) and an immeasurable

Father Mathew.

Hall's Ireland, iii. 60.

Hall's Ireland, iii. 60.

amount of disease and mental suffering, proceeded from the practice of spirit-drinking. The Surgeon-General for Ireland testified that, in Dublin, nearly one-fourth of the deaths of adults were caused by spirit-drinking: a county magistrate of Antrim furnished a list of forty-eight persons who had perished from the same cause, within two miles of his house, and within his own recollection: and there was abundant proof that in extensive neighbourhoods not one dwelling was pure from the vice. Here was scope for the operations of an affectionate despotism. A fitting apostle came, and the experiment was tried.

Temperance Movement.

From that summer of 1829, Temperance Societies had been formed here and there—the first being in New Ross, proposed and opened by the Rev. George Carr, a clergyman of the Established Church. Some inhabitants of Cork—a clergyman, a Quaker, a slater, and a tailor, anxious to accomplish a similar object in their city, commended the enterprise to a man, popular above every one in the place, and liberal enough to be on good terms with men of all opinions—a Capuchin friar, and Superior of the order, by name Theobald Mathew. He gave his mind and heart to the work, and became the great moral, as O'Connell was the political, apostle of Ireland.

Hall's Ireland, i 36.

Springs of the Movement.

It must be allowed that something beyond the morality of the case might probably be in the minds of the followers of Father Mathew. Of the two millions whom he had in a few months pledged to temperance, there were no doubt many who supposed that some great crisis was at hand which required this act of self-denial from all true Irishmen—that they might be up and awake, have their wits about them, and be ready for action—whether Victoria should come to restore the Catholic Church, or the Liberator to be king of Ireland, or Repeal should make every man's plot of ground fruitful in potatoes. It was a prevalent belief among the peasantry that Father Mathew could work miracles; and some even declared that he had raised a person from the dead. The terrific zeal with which the people rushed into a condition of temperance, shows an extraordinary strength of expectation, whatever the object of it might be; and there is no question of the fact, that the political leaders in Ireland considered it of importance to organize and train the water-drinkers of Ireland into a force, with its marching companies, its brass bands, and its community of sentiment. These things show, not only the blessing that it was to the Irish to have for an apostle a man so disinterested as Father Mathew, but also how insecure and dangerous is government by affectionate despotism, which may always be liable to be appropriated by the most artful and unscrupulous agitator for his own purposes. After a year or two from the crowding of the country people into Limerick to take the pledge in such multitudes as to break down iron railings, and cause deaths from trampling and pressure—within a year or two of the time when Father Mathew found it necessary to travel among his hundreds of thousands of disciples, because their thronging to him was dangerous to life and limb, it was noticed that the Irish character appeared to have sensibly changed. If, as has been said, the rebellion of 1798 was put down by force of whiskey and not of arms, it had now evidently become of first-rate importance that the hosts of sober grave-faced men, who came marching to the Temperance field, without fun and frolic, and with no noise but that of their practised bands of music, should not be driven

Annual Register, 1839: Chron. 248.

1835—40.

or led into rebellion; for it was clear that whiskey would not now put them down. It must be hoped that the evil disposed would find it less easy now than formerly to lead or drive them into rebellion, for assuredly rebellion would henceforth be a more formidable thing than it had hitherto been. Here were two millions of men, of a passionate nature—suddenly debarred from an accustomed outlet of passion and animal spirits, and, by the same change, left with a large amount of time on their hands, and with heads cool for thought and device. If they had had more knowledge and a sufficiency of good leaders, this would have been the opportunity—the finest ever offered in the history of their country—for attaching them to the English connexion by showing to them the benefits of that connexion under the Normanby government, and the far greater blessings which must accrue upon their being merely deserved. Now was the golden opportunity for beginning a sound political education, if only the great political apostle had been worthy of the honour of his post. This could not have redeemed Ireland—directly or immediately; for the great underlying mischief was still untouched: but it might have somewhat softened the horrors of the impending doom of Ireland; and it would at least have mitigated the pain on every hand, if that doom had overtaken a nation of thoughtful rational men, striving with courageous prudence and energy against their fate, amidst the respect of a sympathizing world, instead of a mass of helpless and heart-wrung sufferers, betrayed by selfish or senseless agitators, and beguiled to the last by visions conceived in nonsense and vanishing in woe. Father Mathew did his work—did it in purity of heart and devotedness of soul. O'Connell perverted it, as we shall hereafter see. He seized upon the new gravity and critical leisure which Father Mathew had evoked—he seized upon the minds all alive with wonder, and the hearts all glowing with gratitude at the blessed change wrought by a general temperance in health and home, and turned them full into the channel of his repeal agitation. He called, and probably believed, his rule over the Catholic Irish an affectionate despotism: but we can hardly conceive of his influence being more fatal to his trusting countrymen if he had laid waste their fields with actual firebrands instead of with those of the tongue, and driven them from their homes with curses, instead of unsettling their lives with cruel promises of fabulous good. Ireland has been abundantly cursed with barbarous despots; but it may be doubted whether any one of them, in the long course of centuries, has perpetrated such effectual cruelty as the despot whom his victims called their Liberator, and hoped to see their king.

Speedy Results.

Father Mathew did his work, on the whole, well—unquestionably with as much singleness of aim as devotion of soul. Wherever he had been, blessings sprang up, as if he had indeed been the heaven-sent friend that he was taken to be. The water springs gave out health and refreshment; and the daily food had a new relish. The dull eye grew bright; the mad pulse subsided; the staggering gait became a manly tread. The cabin roof kept out the rain: the decent table, with decent seats round it, appeared again in the middle of the lately empty room. There was a bed now, inviting to a sleep which had become light and sweet. The chest gradually filled with clothes, and the stocking in the thatch grew heavy with money. The wrangling voice, roaring curses or tipsy songs, grew gentle and cheerful. The very echoes—at least the celebrated ones—of Killarney and the mountain passes sought by strangers, had changed their tone and theme, and now promised coffee instead of whiskey to the guides on their return. The distilleries were shut up by dozens; and the little suspicious clouds of blue smoke which used to curl away over the heathery knolls in the wilds seemed to have whiffed away altogether. The grog shops were changed into coffee kitchens, and men laid their wits together in speculations about the tactics of O'Connell and the fate of Ireland, instead of breaking one another's heads in drunken frays. There was a large increase, in the very first year, in the number of depositors in Savings' Banks: at the end of two years, when the number of the pledged exceeded two millions and a half, no one of the whole host had appeared before judge or jury. Ireland had before paid away six millions in one year for proof-spirit: now, in two years, the consumption, for all purposes whatever, had lessened to little more than one half. The drawback on the satisfaction of all this was, that the principle on which the reform proceeded was not altogether sound, and the reform itself could not therefore be permanent in all its entireness. When the superstitious disciple kneeled down before the heaven-sent friar, spoke the oath, received the sign of the cross and the uniform blessing, and then had the medal and card put into his hand, it was in a firm belief that some tremendous plague would come upon him if he broke his pledge; that Father Mathew knew men's thoughts, and had a divine power to heal and to save; and that some divine virtue resided in the medal and card. Father Mathew did not originate the superstitions; but he thought it hopeless to contend with them. "If I could prevent them," he said in a letter, "without impeding the glorious cause, they should not have been permitted: but both are so closely entwined, that the tares cannot be pulled out without plucking up the wheat also. The evil will correct itself; and the good, with the Divine assistance, will remain and be permanent." It needs no showing that the temperance movement of Father Mathew is thus reduced from a secure moral reform to a temporary enthusiasm—in as far as the superstitions are included within its scope. It is a rational hope that much seed may have fallen into good ground; but the sower has grievously erred in consigning some to soil where it cannot take root, but must wither away.—It is, however, a most impressive fact that, by one of the affectionate despotisms co-existing with Lord Mulgrave's eminently constitutional rule, two millions and a half of gay or brutal drunkards were turned into a corps of the most thoughtful and emotional men in Ireland.

Porter's Progre
Sec. v. p. 51.

Hall's Ireland, i.
p. 43 (note)

The Franchise and Registrations.

4. There were persons and parties who believed that Ireland would be best redeemed by a cure of her notorious political corruption; and that that cure might be best wrought by such a machinery of supervision as would, in fact, restrict the franchise within what were called safe limits. When men related to each other how landlords in Ireland had cut up their estates to make small freeholds; what droves of ignorant serfs were carried to the polling booths to vote in a mass as their landlord bade them; how these freeholders suddenly passed over from the dominion of their landlords to that of their priests, and how this led to the disfranchisement of the Forties; they were apt to agree that a state of things so bad as to have caused that disfranchisement

1835—40. must be most radically cured by an extension of the same process, or of an equivalent safeguard. From such views and consultations issued Lord Stanley's Registration Bill for Ireland of 1840.

There was no dispute about the enormity of the abuses of the franchise in Ireland. Lord Melbourne's government waited only for a further settlement of the registration machinery of England and Scotland to take in hand the reform of such corruption in Ireland as was practised by means of registration certificates. It was not difficult for a man to get registered three or four times over, obtaining a certificate each time; and of course, it was easy enough to make these certificates passports for fictitious votes. In order to guard against this and other abuses, Lord Stanley's measure proposed a method and machinery of registration so onerous and irksome as would, in the opinion of government and of a majority in parliament, act as a virtual disfranchisement. If every vote might be annually revised, and an appeal on the part of the voter must be made to the judge once a year, it could not be believed that voters circumstanced as multitudes of the Irish tenantry were, would or could undergo such a discipline for the sake of the privilege of the franchise.—Lord J. Russell thought this Bill the most formidable attack yet made on the principles of the Reform Act. The aim of the Reform legislation was to extend and facilitate the exercise of the franchise, while this proposed method of registration threw every possible difficulty and discouragement in the way. As the case was, however, one which could not be neglected, and a bad measure would be carried if a good one were not proposed, the Ministers bestirred themselves to prepare an Irish Registration Bill which should drive out Lord Stanley's. The Ministers did not disguise their apprehensions of the effect of the Opposition measure, if carried, nor that they conceived its operation, if not its intent, to be to counteract the Emancipation measure of 1829 by rendering it difficult or impossible for the poorer—that is, the Catholic portion of Ireland—to send their fair share of representatives to parliament. Lord John Russell pointed to the much-dreaded power of O'Connell in Ireland as little formidable while the Irish should have faith in the justice and good-will of the British parliament. "That," said he, "I believe to be the state of things now. But let this Bill pass: show that you are determined, step by step, to take away the franchise from the people of Ireland, to disable them from sending Roman Catholics as members of this House; obtain that supremacy if you can which you have not had for many years; indulge in the triumph which the minority would then indulge in over the majority; insult, vilify, and abuse the Roman Catholics; tell them that the people are ignorant, degraded, and priest-ridden, and speak of those priests in a tone of contumely and contempt; do all this, and you will have done more for repeal than anything the hon. and learned gentleman has been able to effect by his speeches upon this subject." Such language as this from a member of the Cabinet indicates what was felt of the extremity of the risk.—Lord Stanley and his friends naturally protested against the charge of insidiously contriving to narrow the franchise, and to keep the Catholic representatives out of parliament. Sir R. Peel was among those who thus protested. It is most probable that they meant—as men in parliament always do mean—only what they considered good; to cut off abuses, and leave the franchise sound: and if that operation

Lord Stanley's Registration Bill. Hansard, lii. 623—628.

Hansard, liv. 202.

Hansard, liv. 213.

should issue in giving less power than before to the ignorant Catholic population, they could not pretend to think that consequence any great evil. But they, by their very vindication of their intentions, exposed themselves to the charge of not understanding the conditions of the suffrage in the country districts of Ireland, where, whether they knew it or not, this Bill would act as a sweeping disfranchisement. If they knew this, they could not quarrel with the charges of their opponents; if they did not know it, they ought to have known it.

The danger was from this state of things being little understood by the greater number of members in the House. If the Ministers were alarmed at the outset of Lord Stanley's enterprise, they might well be in a panic as the summer drew on. The second reading of the Bill was carried by a majority of 16 on the 26th of March. On the question of going into committee on the 20th of May, there was a majority of three against Ministers. They were beaten in every attempt to throw out their opponents on any point whatever. O'Connell grew savage; and the more violent supporters of the Bill exasperated his passion by insults which no man of flesh and blood could be expected to endure. When, on this first night in committee, he said that this was a Bill for trampling on the liberties of the people of Ireland, several members shouted in his face—whistled in his face—laughed full in his face. At each insult he repeated the words—the inattention of the Chairman allowing the scene to go on: and after the third repetition of the assertion, in his most emphatic manner, Mr. O'Connell brought matters to a crisis by exclaiming, "If you were ten times as beastly in your uproar and bellowing, I should still feel it to be my duty to interpose to prevent this injustice." On being called to account, some of his humour peeped out in his appeal to natural history. "Bellowing" was certainly the right word, he said; and what creatures but beasts were able to bellow? The uproar showed the extremity of the hope and fear of parties in one way; and then, the obstructions and struggles in committee showed the same thing in another way. No means and devices were spared to delay the progress of the Bill; and, on the 6th of July, Lord Stanley gave in, for this session. His tone was, reasonably enough, one of triumph, while acknowledging the certainty of defeat by delay, if he did not withdraw his measure. He repudiated the censure most prominently put forward about his Bill—that it did not raise any question about the franchise—avowing that the reform of the registration was the aim of the measure. He pointed with pride to the 300 members who had sustained an Opposition Bill against the whole power of the government through ten divisions, in nine of which the Ministers were beaten: and he promised a renewal of the struggle early in the next session.

Hansard, liii. 157.

Hansard, liv. 454.

Hansard, liv. 1093.

Hansard, lv. 459.

In the interval, an association was formed in Ulster, for the object of procuring a reform of the registration; and Lord Stanley made some few, and not very important changes in his Bill, on their information. He introduced his measure on the 2d of February; and the government brought in their rival Bill two days afterwards. There is something painful in the retrospect of this whole transaction. It was now several years since the Reform Bill had passed, and nothing had been done for electoral improvement in Ireland. The Whig government offered reasons and excuses in plenty; but nothing that they could

The Government Bill.

Hansard, lv. 274.

1835—40. say obviated the general impression that that must be a government too weak to rule which cannot get its proper business done till it is roused into a spirit of rivalship with the Opposition. Lord Howick had voted steadily with Lord Stanley on his Registration measure, from the conviction that some reform of the kind was imperatively needed. The Ministers promised a rival measure: the Ulster Association, and their nine defeats on Lord Stanley's move, quickened their speed; and their Bill was ready to run a race with Lord Stanley's through the next session. But they brought dislike and some contempt on their Bill and themselves, by the unstatesmanlike and somewhat petty method which they adopted now, as too often before, of tacking to their measure—as a sort of postscript—a proposal of vast importance, which seemed to demand previous announcement, and a special and well-prepared discussion. It was one of the most painful signs of the weakness of the successive Whig ministries, that they had recourse to the vulgar expedient of surprises, almost as often as they had any serious work to do. For the moment, it appeared to give them some advantage, by depriving the Opposition of all opportunity for immediate concert, and by exciting afresh an emotion of hope and gratitude among the dissatisfied Liberal party throughout the country: but such emotions grow weaker and less responsive under a series of surprises; and the Opposition learned by experience how to act in such cases. In the instance of the Reform Bill, when all the world knew that the men came into power for the purpose of doing a particular work, it was prudent and eminently beneficial to keep secret to the last moment the scope and details of the measure on which every man, in and out of parliament, was speculating. But the perpetual repetition of secrecy and surprising announcements took, after a time, the appearance of a trick; and especially when, as in the case before us, an essential and wholly unlooked-for change was arbitrarily connected with a Bill which professed something quite different. The government Bill, after treating of the registration of voters in Ireland, went on to propose a radical change in the franchise—its establishment on "a basis distinct and independent," and entirely new. The so-called Registration Bill was in fact an unannounced new Reform Bill for Ireland. The valuation under the Poor Law (of which we shall presently speak) was to be the entirely new basis: and an occupier of a tenement of the yearly value of £5, under a term of not less than fourteen years, was to enter upon the rights of suffrage hitherto enjoyed by persons having a beneficial interest to the amount of £10. Hansard, lv. 279.

Those who most seriously desired the extension of the franchise in Ireland, were perhaps the most concerned at this method of proposing it. They felt that a question so great was injured by such treatment of it. The Ministers had no reason to feel elated by the reception of their measure. Lord Howick, and others who had acted with him in the preceding session, now, when they saw the matter really taken in hand, joined the government party again: the debate was full and earnest, extending over four nights; yet the Ministerial majority for the second reading was only five. Hansard, lvi 1126. Their opponents took for granted that they always knew that they could not carry their Bill. There is no need to attribute to them such guilt as would be implied in sporting with the expectations of the disfranchised thousands in Ireland for party purposes: but they cannot be acquitted of the levity or miscalculation (to say the least of it) of bringing forward a measure of such tantalizing promise, under circumstances eminently unfavourable to its success. Lord J. Russell's next course was not one which could command the respect of any party. After the division, he announced the desire of the government to lose no time with the Bill, and that he should therefore bring it forward again the next Monday. When Monday came, however, he proposed to defer the discussion till after Easter, as he found many members impressed by the proposal of the new franchise, and he wished to obtain more full and accurate information before the matter was further discussed. It is not to be wondered at that this awkward explanation was received with "shouts of laughter;" nor that the Opposition taunted Ministers with having never entertained any expectation of passing the all-important provision of their Bill. They had had the recess in which to prepare for what they knew must be a critical struggle; and now, after the second stage of the business, and after many protestations of a desire to lose no time, they asked for a pause, in order to procure information enough to proceed upon in the discussion of their own measure. The postponement proposed was to the 23rd of April; and from Lord Stanley himself down to the lowest Irish newspapers in the Repeal interest, there was one loud protestation of belief that the real aim of the Ministers was to drive Lord Stanley's measure to the end of the session, and not to carry their own. Lord Stanley, meantime, gave early notice that he should contest to the last the proposal of a £5 qualification. The immediate consequence was, that, prior to all discussion, the Ministers raised the qualification from £5 to £8.

Hansard, lvi. 1153.

Hansard, lvi. 1156.

When the House went into committee on the 26th of April, Lord Howick moved an amendment on the first clause, designed for the better ascertainment of that "beneficial interest" of the occupier, which was practically a constant difficulty in the determining of rating and electoral qualification. The amendment, in fact, brought before the Committee the question whether the amount of poor-rate paid should be the sole qualification of a voter, whether he had a beneficial interest in his holding or not; or whether a beneficial interest should be maintained as a test of the right to vote. Sir R. Peel and others saw that the fate of the amendment would decide that of the Bill. But, when Lord Howick's amendment was carried by a majority of 21, Lord J. Russell proposed delay, to consider whether Ministers must withdraw their measure. They concluded not to withdraw it, as Lord Howick declared that his amendment proposed a merely supplementary qualification, and not one which should supersede that provided in the Bill. From this time, the scene in committee was painful and humbling:—every Liberal member who came forward had something essential to propose about the franchise, different from what any one else had thought of: the government were irresolute and changeable: the Opposition laughed and triumphed. The final division took place on the qualification clause, when there was a majority of 11 against Ministers, supported as they were by O'Connell and his influence. If all else had been favourable, the vacillation of Ministers among the propositions of their own supporters was enough to ensure the loss of their Bill. They seemed to be influenced by the last speaker, after the manner of persons ignorant of their business; and they shifted the amount of rating again and again, as if they did not know that, with every such change, they were proposing to admit or to exclude half or

Hansard, lvii. 1091.

Hansard, lvii. 1131.

Hansard, lvii 1274.

1835—40.

two-thirds of a constituency with a stroke of the pen. Here, however, was a close of the unhappy business. It was impossible to go on; and Lord J. Russell moved that the Chairman should quit the chair.—Nor could Lord Stanley's Bill be proceeded with during that session. The whole transaction ended without other results than aggravated provocation of the Irish, who had been tantalized to no purpose—great loss of the time and patience of parliament—and an irrecoverable decline of the Whig administration in the esteem and good-will of their supporters, and the estimation of the nation at large.—Here was an end, too—and this was perhaps no bad result—of all speculation about the cure of political corruption being the true means of the redemption of Ireland. If Ireland was to wait for this, it would be too late to redeem her at all; for it was clear that electoral renovation would not be granted to her while there were two parties in the British parliament.

Hansard, lvii. 1284.

Failure of both Bills.

Political Education.

5. Some of the most earnest and thoughtful of the friends of Ireland were among the many who looked for her redemption at the other end of the scale from the advocates of an affectionate despotism. Instead of desiring that the people should have every thing done for them, and be kept out of sight of the law which they hated and distrusted, these friends of the Irish proposed to induce a knowledge and love of the function and prevalence of law by making the inhabitants of Ireland learn self-government by the discipline of good municipal institutions. England was now sprinkled all over with little republics, where her citizens would receive the best political education in the best manner; and it was thought that a similar system would do for Ireland all that she needed, by improving her people socially and politically, and bringing her into a relation with England which would silence for ever the cry of Repeal. The proposal was a good and great one; and, but for the deep underlying mischief, it might have largely availed, in course of years. But this mischief was exactly in the way, in the present case. It must precisely intercept the beneficial results of municipal reform; for, among all the curses attributable to the insecurity of title to the possession of land in Ireland, none is more fatal than its prevention of the growth of a middle class.

Municipal Reform.

There was no question on which the passions of the two great parties in Parliament became more fierce, as the debate was renewed from year to year, than on this—of Municipal Reform in Ireland. There was hardly a man, in or out of Parliament, who did not take a side, with all the decision and certainty, and all the wonder and wrath at his opponents, which attend upon the discussion of vital political questions. It was not only that Lord John Russell declared in his place that this was "a vital question to the present administration:" it was also known to be vital to the fate of Ireland—whether she was to be governed on one set of principles or the opposite:—and again, it was felt to be vital to the fate of Great Britain too, as determining whether she was to halt between two opinions, or to decide finally for that principle of renovation and progress of which the policy of her latest years had been the exponent. Considering these things, the strife could not but be fierce—it was hardly possible for individual opponents to be just to each other: and for the respective parties it was quite impossible. We, however, at the distance of ten or twelve years, can see things more plainly than any one saw them then. We have had grave admonition and mournful rebuke about our confident judg-

Hansard, xxxvi. 209.

ment, our positiveness, our presumptuous and shallow censures of public men and of our own antagonists in argument. While still only half-seeing about Ireland—still "sounding on, a dim and perilous way" in investigating the sources of her woes, we are not so dark and insensible as we were ten years ago; and we are now able to perceive that, if both parties and almost all individual men were wrong, both parties and all leading men were also right.

The views of the respective parties, as declared by their spokesmen, were these:—

Municipal Principle.

The Whig Ministers and the Liberal party generally regarded Municipal Reform in Ireland as an essential part of the scheme of Institutional Renovation which the nation had deliberately adopted. It was the proper and necessary finish of Parliamentary Reform in all the three kingdoms, and Borough Reform in England, Wales, and Scotland. They considered it especially indispensable in regard to Ireland, because Ireland needed, above every other part of the empire, an identification with England in her political privileges and fortunes.—They regarded Municipal Reform as more necessary in Ireland than elsewhere, because an abuse existed in Ireland, remediable by these means, perfectly singular in its mischief and intolerableness—the injurious distinction of creeds established by the existing Corporation system. In the time of James I., municipal officers who would not enforce Protestant modes of worship in their respective towns were ejected, and creatures of the government put in their places: and the new holders of office surrendered the rights and privileges of their townsmen into the king's hands, and accepted fresh charters which allowed scarcely any powers to the local residents, and left the nomination to all important offices to the government. The government nominees had power to appoint their successors: and thus, the exclusion of the Catholic majority from local power and privilege was as complete as the Protestant minority chose. In 1672, some relaxation of the Protestant monopoly took place in virtue of the "New Rules" issued by the Irish government. But the Revolution, sixteen years afterwards, annihilated the virtue of these rules, and all social advantage derivable from Municipal institutions was again monopolized by Protestants.—Within this monopoly, smaller monopolies arose, till, in many Irish towns, the corporate bodies had become mere family parties—all offices being held by relations and dependents of the chief member, or of a great Protestant landlord in the neighbourhood; and even the parliamentary member being merely a nominee of these nominees. These usurped powers became actually subjects of proprietorship—being transmitted by inheritance, openly sold to competitors, and recognised as a ground of compensation by the National government when the Union interfered with the right of these "patrons" or proprietors to send members to parliament. Under such a holding of municipal power and privilege, there could of course be no impartial administration of justice. No one can wonder at the prevalent distrust and hatred of the law in Ireland when it is considered how hopeless was the chance of the Catholic and the man of liberal politics in a locality where justice must be sought, if at all, from magistrates, juries, and minor officials, who were chosen for their zeal in an adverse religious and political faith.—Then again, a large number—in some

Polit. Dict. ii. 392.

1835—40. cases almost the whole body—of burgesses were non-residents, patronized by the officials, and introduced to borough privileges in swarms, while the inhabitants were left helpless, to be victimized by their impertinent oppressors. The charity funds, the lands, the borough houses, the water-works—all the property which should have made their towns healthful and handsome, and have relieved their poor, and educated the young, and raised the condition of the whole local population—went into the pockets of half a dozen men, or into utter waste and loss. The Commissioners' Reports tell of thousands of acres of land which would, at that date (1833) have readily brought in £1 an acre, being let, on leases of 99 years, for 1s. an acre, or less: of tolls and customs being pocketed, as a matter of course, by the Mayor and Aldermen, while the streets were unpaved, dark, and never cleaned: of the noble water-works of Archbishop Bolton at Cashel being destroyed from utter neglect—miles of underground conduits being choked up, and the water turned off for the convenience of a miller—the whole being recoverable by an outlay of £500, while the Corporate officers were making presents to one another of many thousands annually, by iniquitous leases and bargains.—Here was a case as strong as need be. In desiring to reform it, and in stating the inestimable value of free municipal institutions, the Whig government and the Liberal party were eminently right.—Where they were wrong was in assuming too easily that free municipal institutions would answer in Ireland as in England; in concluding that the true reason for the opposition of their antagonists was a fear for the Protestant Church in Ireland, which overpowered all consideration for the good of the majority; and in unscrupulously charging their adversaries with a predilection for tyranny, in their advocacy of a centralizing principle of government for Ireland, and with rapacity and corruption in desiring to retain the profits of the old system for their local partisans.

Centralizing Principle.

The Conservatives, on the other hand, seem to have been right in perceiving that the peculiar condition of society in Ireland must prevent the full and free working of popular institutions. They seem to have laid hold of the fearful truth recently expressed by one who loves Ireland too well to be of any party, in regard to her interests. "A government based on popular institutions," says Mr. Pim, "fails to secure order, unless it have the support of the people. Ireland appears to labour under the difficulty of having aristocratic social institutions without an aristocracy; and the mechanism of a popular government, inapplicable to its present social condition; because it does not possess an educated middle class, by whom these popular institutions might be worked." The aim of the Conservatives was to prevent the assignment to Ireland of "the mechanism of a popular government, inapplicable to its present social condition." They had a perfect right to prefer a centralizing principle of government for a country in so peculiar a condition; and the question of their credit should have depended altogether on the merits or demerits of their centralizing scheme. From this point of view, they appear to have been more clear-sighted than the Whigs; while from another, they seem to have committed the grossest error belonging to the time and occasion. They adhered, consciously or unconsciously, to the hope and expectation which founded the Church in Ireland, and has kept it there, *vi et armis*, as a Missionary Establishment. "For the last three centuries," said a con-

Condition and Prospects of Ireland, p. 190.

London Review, Oct. 1839, p. 101.

temporary writer, "Ireland has only had a provisional government, constituted for a state of things dependent on the duration of Popery, which was supposed to be a temporary evil." To this fatally foolish supposition, the Conservatives adhered, in their opposition to Municipal Reform—not avowedly, and probably not consciously, but all that they proposed, and every step when they opposed, was vitiated by a tacit assumption, that, while the Catholics were to be cared for, it was as a suffering multitude who were to be Protestants ere long. This gave a provisional air to the proposals of the Conservatives, and disabled them from appreciating the Whig aim of settling matters on a basis which would endure.—Again, it was natural for the Conservatives to remonstrate against the rashness (as they thought it) of encouraging the unhappy disposition of the Irish to hanker after some vague political remedy for miseries purely social or moral. It was natural that they should look upon the Whigs, when holding out unreasonable hopes to the Irish from Municipal Reform, as too much resembling O'Connell in his promises of repeal and its blessings. But they were felt to be quite as wrong as their adversaries ever were in charging those adversaries with vulgar popularity-hunting, with hiding a fear of O'Connell under a mask of political action, and with treating Ireland with a stupid and insulting good-will, like that of a man who gives a clever child a watch that will not go—moreover, at the end of an explanation of the beauty and value of watches.

Both parties desired, earnestly and perhaps equally, the sweeping away of the intolerable abuse of the existing corporations. They differed, broadly and passionately, as to what the substitute should be: and they resembled one another but too much in the pertinacity with which they affixed discreditable imputations upon each other.

HISTORY OF THE MUNICIPAL MEASURE.

The history of the five years' struggle to establish "normal schools" of political education in 71 towns of Ireland, where 900,000 inhabitants might begin their training in free citizenship, was briefly this.

1836.

Hansard, xxxi. 4.

Hansard, xxxi. 495.

Hansard, xxxi. 1050—1076.

In 1833, the Irish Corporation Commissioners began their work of inquiry. In 1836, the Royal Speech at the opening of the session expressed a hope that parliament would be able to apply a remedy to the abuses of the Irish Corporations "founded upon the same principles" as the Municipal reform Acts for England and Scotland. The Irish Attorney General, Mr. O'Loghlen, early introduced the Ministerial Bill, which was allowed to be read without opposition, a second time, on the 29th of February, as a sort of pledge that all parties were disposed to abolish the existing system, whatever they might do towards establishing a better. After this, Sir R. Peel explained his views, which were (in their main points) that, in the existing condition of Ireland, it was hopeless that free institutions would work, for want of the class specially needed to work them: that therefore the place of the old corporations, now to be abolished, should not be filled by new corporate bodies, which would only introduce new dissension and corruption, but that the Sheriffs and Recorders should be appointed by the Crown, the local affairs of the inhabitants being managed by Commissioners, chosen by popular election. He did not conceive it possible to deprive the body of existing freemen of their rights; because they had long ago become proprietary and hereditary: and he believed, finally, that the only way to preserve any impartiality in the administration of provin-

1835—40. cial affairs in Ireland was to vest the principal appointments in the Crown, as, from the great preponderance of Catholics, the exclusion of Protestants now, under a system of popular election, would be as complete and unfair as the exclusion of Catholics had hitherto been, under a system of self-election in the corporations. This last reason was not one which increased the popular opinion of Sir R. Peel's wisdom; as it was clear that it begged the question of the impartiality of the Crown, and it could proceed only upon the supposition that the Catholics would have the same confidence as Sir R. Peel himself in that impartiality. Lord F. Egerton moved, in accordance with the views of Sir R. Peel, the abolition of the old corporations, without the creation of any new; decreeing the government of towns by officers appointed by the Crown. He would even have the commissioners for the administration of borough property provided in the same manner. This motion was thrown out by a large majority. But its theory met with better success in the Lords. There, the Bill was "amended" by cutting out of it all the clauses relating to the constitution of new corporate bodies. Out of 140 clauses, 106 had been in substance omitted, while 18 had been added: and, while the "amended Bill" abolished corporate institutions entirely, it actually preserved to many of the officials who profited by the old system the power and emolument of their situations. Of course, this was not to be endured. The Commons rejected the amendments, and sent back the Bill to the Lords in nearly its original state. Lord Melbourne was outvoted by a majority of 97 in an attempt to get the Bill reconsidered. It was sent down to the Commons, with a statement of their Lordships' reasons for adhering to their amendments. On the 30th of June, Lord John Russell moved that the amendments should be considered that day three months: the House agreed; and thus the Bill was lost for that session.

Hansard, xxxi. 1318.

Hansard, xxxiv. 218.

Hansard, xxxiv. 963.

Hansard, xxxiv. 1107.

1837. In introducing the Bill again in the next February, Lord J. Russell was understood to intimate that the Melbourne Administration would stand or fall by it. It was, he said, "a vital question to the present administration;" so the Opposition knew what they had to expect and to do; and the contention was very fierce. Lord F. Egerton repeated his motion of the preceding year. The debate lasted over three nights, and was of great interest from the clear grounds taken by both parties. The Reformers dwelt upon the sacrifice of all other interests to that of the Church, which they charged upon the Conservatives, urging home upon them their fear of the Catholic majority of Ireland;—a fear which was by no means unreasonable, considering the oppression under which the Catholics had suffered, and the possible effects of reaction. Lord Stanley avowed in Committee, that if he saw the Church in a more secure position, some of his strongest objections to the Bill would be removed: but it was not candid to represent this as the only ground of the Opposition. Their highest and principal ground was the dissimilarity of Irish and English character and circumstances, which rendered it impossible that the same institutions should work alike in the two countries. It was remarked that some of the Opposition speakers, who had done their utmost in debate, were absent from the division. The Ministers had a majority of 80. On the third reading, their majority fell to 55.

Hansard, xxxvi. 657.

Hansard, xxxvi. 958.

Hansard, xxxvii. 1110.

The day before the second reading in the House of Lords, a gathering of peers took place at Apsley House, to agree upon what should be done. A considerable number were for throwing out the Bill at once, but the Duke of Wellington overruled them, with advice which, by their account, was highly characteristic. He willed that the Bill should go into Committee: and when asked how he would then have it dealt with, he said it would be time enough to think of that when it was there. Before this, a report had got abroad, which was now believed; that the Conservative leaders would pass a Municipal Reform Bill, if complete security was at the same time afforded to the Church: though it was not easy to see how this could be done, to the satisfaction of the Conservatives, but by still subordinating the Catholic majority to a favoured Protestant minority. The next move of the Duke of Wellington confirmed the rumour. On the 5th of May, he proposed a postponement of the discussion, on the ground of wishing to see what would be done in the other House about the Tithe and Poor Law questions; and he obtained a majority over Ministers of 77. The House of Commons proceeded slowly; and, when the 9th of June arrived, the Lords again postponed their debate, leaving the Premier helpless under their majority of 86. The speedy dissolution of parliament, in consequence of the death of the King, stopped the progress of the measure; and thus again, at the risk of great irritation in the Irish against the peers, it once more stood over to another session. 1835—40. Hansard, xxxvii. 599. Hansard, xxxviii. 1329.

This was the date of the famous compromise before related, when Lord J. Russell consented to the sacrifice of the Appropriation principle for the sake of Sir R. Peel's surrender of his opposition to the Irish Municipal Reform Bill. All went smoothly for some time—the Conservatives fully admitting that, if there were to be Corporations at all, they should be appointed by popular election. But then came the question of the franchise; and the parties found it impossible to agree on the qualification. Sir R. Peel desired a £10 qualification, with the test of rating. Lord J. Russell would admit either the parliamentary qualification of £10, or the test of rating with a £5 qualification.—Sir R. Peel would not yield. The Ministers assembled their supporters at one of the government offices, to consult whether they could concede anything further, for the sake of getting the Bill passed. It was decided that there should be no further compromise; and on the 11th of June, they carried their point of the qualification by a majority of 20. The Bill passed the Commons by a majority of 35.—But in the Lords, a modified £10 qualification was substituted immediately. Other amendments were introduced which it was wholly impossible for the authors of the measure to sanction. The Bill was bandied between the Houses, as it had been two years before, and dropped in exactly the same manner. 1838. Hansard, xliii 561. Hansard, xliii. 1070. Hansard, xliv. 1115.

In 1839, the Royal Speech declared the reform and amendment of the Municipal Corporations of Ireland to be essential to the interests of that country; and in eight days afterwards—on the 14th of February—Lord Morpeth brought forward the subject again—for the fourth year in succession. By this time, the leaders of both parties were ready for further concession. The Ministers proposed an £8 qualification, with the test of rating to the Poor Law. In towns where the Poor Law should have been in operation for three years, the franchise was to be assimilated to the English. Sir R. Peel and Lord Stanley agreed to this proposal, and rebuked the inveteracy of opposition manifested by some of their own party. This opposition was carried 1839. Hansard, xlv. 360. Hansard, xlvi. 186, 7.

1835—40. into Committee; but the Bill passed the Commons on the 15th of July.—The Premier pointed out to the Opposition Lords that by this time the Bill was almost their own, it being made up of a series of amendments in the parts which had been the subject of argument: but Lord Lyndhurst, in his apprehension that, "except in the northern province of Ireland, there would be in every town a Radical and Roman Catholic Mayor, a Radical and Roman Catholic Town Council, Radical and Roman Catholic magistrates," moved and carried an amendment about the franchise, with several others, which, again, it was impossible for the authors of the measure to submit to. Thus fruitlessly closed the fourth year of the debate. Lord Lyndhurst could not wonder if he was more unpopular in Ireland than any other man in the empire.

Hansard, xlix. 751.

1840. In 1840, the Bill passed rapidly through the Lower House, being supported by Sir R. Peel. Lord Lyndhurst was again ready for opposition; and his amendments were so many and so injurious to the measure, that it required much command of temper on every hand to bear quietly with so audacious a resistance to the conviction and will of the majority; of the majority, that is, everywhere but in the House of Lords. There, he carried all before him—carried his provisions for the patronage of the old freemen—his £10 qualification—his frustration of the appointment of candidates for the shrievalty by the Town Councils—and several other points. When the Bill was sent down to the Commons, they demurred at the amendments, held conferences, argued, and finally yielded; and the deteriorated and corrupted Bill became law on the 10th of August, 1840.

Hansard, lv. 163—171.

Hansard, lv. 1394.

Political Dictionary, ii. 394.

The main provisions of the Bill were these. Ten corporate towns were continued as corporations under the provisions of the Act—being constituted of Mayor, Aldermen, and Burgesses. Thirty-seven smaller corporations were dissolved—nineteen of which possessed corporate funds to the amount of £100 a year and upwards, and eighteen which had corporate funds to a smaller amount. Any of these boroughs which had a population exceeding 3000, might have a Charter on petition of the majority to the Queen in Council. As for the others, their corporate funds were to be vested in Commissioners, to be applied to public objects. Some towns were already supplied with Commissioners, under a former Act. Those which had not any Commissioners were divided into two classes: in the first of which were towns empowered to elect a Board of Commissioners, in the proportion of one Commissioner to every 500 inhabitants: and in the second were the smaller towns whose corporate funds were to be administered by the poor law guardians of the locality. The way was left open for the smaller towns to rise to the faculty of having Commissioners, and of obtaining a Charter of incorporation, when ready for the privilege.—The franchise was a Household suffrage, with a £10 qualification. In other points, the Bill closely resembled the English Act.

There is no doubt about the beneficial operation of this measure, spoiled as it was. The sweeping away of the old Corporations was a great blessing; and this, and the exclusion of the centralizing principle, reconciled the Liberal party to the passage of the Bill, in preference to waiting longer. How it might have fared with Ireland at this day under the undisturbed operation of the measure, many may dispute, but none can affirm: for the great underlying mischief was about to stir and heave, and overthrow all hope that by Municipal Reform, or any other measure yet attempted, the redemption of Ireland was to be achieved.

Certainty of Maintenance.

6. As for those who acknowledged a deeper necessity than any of these, from having obtained a glimpse of the great underlying mischief, they desired a Poor Law for Ireland, and had more to say in favour of their specific than sincere men were willing to controvert. Whether Ireland should have a Poor Law of the nature of the English one was perhaps, of all the political questions of our time, the most difficult of decision. O'Connell himself, who was undoubtedly in earnest on this question, unmingled as it was with any party feelings and devices, vacillated for years between the perplexities on either hand. He, for once, took pains to learn and consider the economical considerations of the case; and when they were fresh in his mind, was full of hope and joy for Ireland, and of gratitude, in which he called on all his countrymen to join, to the Whig ministry which proposed the effectual boon. Then, again, his doubts would recur;—doubts whether the pauperism of Ireland could be ascertained so far as to justify an invocation to it to come and be fed; doubts whether it might not peril the souls, or at least injure the spiritual interests, of the Catholics, to interfere with their private almsgiving; doubts whether the mendicancy of the poor had not something holy in it with which it was impious to meddle; doubts whether the glory and grace of the Irish character would not disappear under the operation of sound economical principles and methods; and finally, doubts whether the ordinary run of Irish landlords could or would support the poor of their own districts. Up to the year 1836, he had constantly opposed the introduction of any Poor Law system into Ireland; and it is possible that some of the personal motives ascribed to him at the time—the dread of weakening the popular dependence upon himself, and of losing his influence by the assimilation of Ireland to England—might have been more or less the cause of his opposition: but, if so, all such considerations gave way before the disclosures of the Commission of Inquiry in 1836. It appears probable that the Agitator himself was unaware of the misery of the Irish poor—the abiding, unintermitting misery which they had come to regard as the condition of their life. This appears probable from the considerations that his own tenantry were in a very wretched condition under the management of middle-men, over whom he exercised no supervision; and that he met his countrymen only in the aspect of adorers of himself—in worshipping crowds, on days of political business, or groups of watchers on holidays, who cheered on his beagles, and echoed the huntsman's cry, and laughed with delight at seeing the great Liberator enjoying his sport. It is probable that the exposures of the Commissioners' Report were as new and terrific to O'Connell himself as to any member of the government: and that they overpowered for a time his worst tendencies, and made him, for a short interval, a single-hearted patriot. The period was very short. Under the impression of the dreadful anecdotes of the Report—of men lying for weeks on damp straw in a mud hovel, because they were too weak from hunger to rise and go in search of a better fate;—of the feeding on "yellow weed" and unripe potatoes;—of the artificial spasms and vomitings induced for the sake of getting warmth and shelter in the cholera hospitals;—while these things were fresh in his imagination, O'Connell wrote to the electors of Kilkenny on the absolute necessity of a Poor Law for Ireland. He added to his

O'Connell on the Poor Law.

1835—40. reasons of necessity an offer of one more chance to England of escaping a repeal of the Union. If she did not give Ireland a good Poor Law, she must undergo Repeal. He still feared mischief from the Poor Law, because he could not—at least he did not—separate the abuses and fatal operation of the corrupted Poor Law of Elizabeth from its principle; and he pointed to the economical and moral devastation it had caused in England as consequences certain to occur in Ireland: yet, so fearful was the existing wretchedness, that it seared him from all speculation for the future, and compelled him to call for a system of legal charity, without a moment's delay.—While it was preparing, he fell back somewhat from his new convictions; told the Trades Unions that it was bad government that had made beggars; that good government was the best Poor Law; that a Poor Law would keep down wages, and increase pauperism; and that the House of Lords would make this law a means of subjecting the people to the great landlords. He should prefer a tax on absentees, to be applied in promoting emigration, and in maintaining asylums for the aged, the infant, and the sick.

Hansard, xxxvi. 486. In the session of 1837, when the Irish Poor Law Bill was introduced by the government, Mr. O'Connell declared that, seeing its necessity, he should not oppose it: but he assailed every important part of the measure, separately, while he declared himself a supporter of the whole. His pleas were curiously contradictory. The Irish would never enter workhouses: yet these houses would maintain men in idleness who ought to be at work upon the land. The land could not maintain the poor—the production being only one-fourth that of England, and one-half what (considering the inferiority of the soil) it ought to be: yet, this Bill would make the people the slaves of the landlords. The natural Poor Law—of sympathy—was the best; and Ireland's charity, hitherto the glory of Ireland, would be extinguished by the imposition of a legal charity: yet, he would support asylums, and no other charitable institutions willingly, because asylums for the infirm and sick could not encourage fraud and mendicancy. He declared that a Poor Law would only swell the numbers —then amounting to nearly two millions and a half—of persons absolutely destitute for a large portion of every year: yet he ridiculed the notion of Union Houses, because they would hold only 80,000, and claimed equal assistance for the two millions and a half. While protesting his belief that the measure would aggravate pauperism, and suddenly extinguish private charity, he protested against the gradual introduction and extension of the institution, and claimed immediate and full rescue by means of it for the starving millions of his countrymen. Thus shifting were his views while he declared himself a supporter of the government, and voted for the Bill. He deserved, by his previous conduct, the imputation, that he was taking what could be got from England, while industriously providing for the failure of the measure by disgusting his countrymen with it beforehand: but the impression derived by an impartial reader from his speeches in parliament is, that he really was perplexed by the difficulties of the case. His intellect had, in fact, by this time, become so injured by his habits of partiality and exaggeration, and tampering with truth for patriotic purposes, that it had really become irksome and difficult to him to entertain any question so serious in his own view as to compel him to balance the evidence of its respective sides. With all his astuteness in the conduct of intrigues, and the management of the Irish mind, he had become incapable of apprehending distinctions which were all-important in the consideration of measures founded on any principle; as, for instance, in his declaration of the next session, that the "strange distinction" between "poverty" and "destitution" was not practical—was too nice for Ireland—and so forth; whereas this distinction—the ground-work of the whole Poor Law reform in England, and institution in Ireland—is as broad and palpable as the distinction between a householder and a vagrant. In that next session, of 1838, Mr. O'Connell took his stand decidedly—he said finally—against the measure. He declared that he had before wanted moral courage to oppose it; but now he had grown older, and somewhat firmer. The fact probably was, that the first agonizing impression of the misery of Ireland had worn off, and his natural prepossessions, as an adventurer, as a man of reckless passions, and as a Catholic, impressed with the blessedness and holiness of spontaneous almsgiving, now recovered their sway, and led him to oppose the introduction of an institution which was too regular and exact, too legal and impartial, too repressive of wrong, and favourable to homely good, to be otherwise than distasteful and alarming to him. In the final period of legislation, therefore, O'Connell went against the Bill, with all his forces; and among those forces, he enlisted every truth of political economy which he could apply against a compulsory charity in general, and such treatment of the misery of Ireland in particular. His last appearance on this question in parliament was in the character of a rigid political economist.

Hansard, xl. 947.

QUESTION OF A POOR LAW.

The case was indeed perplexing enough to sounder thinkers than O'Connell; and his conduct may be regarded as a mere exaggeration of the thought of the time on this question. The very officials themselves were divided as to whether Ireland should have a Poor Law or not. Some of the Commissioners were in favour of it, and others against it:—their Third Report was against it—the Secretary for it. The greater number of political economists in England were for it; but a few of the most eminent were against it.

VIEW OF ADVOCATES.

In an abstract view, the case was clear enough. The unbounded spontaneous charity of the Irish, which makes the family that have potatoes for the day take in and feed the family that have none, is a fatal encourager of recklessness, as the givers expect to be destitute and thus fed, in their turn. A legal charity would act as a check here. The imposition of rates upon the holders of the land would act as a regulator upon the fatal system of land letting which prevailed in the south and west of Ireland: a system from which individuals could extricate themselves only by means of such an arrangement as this. The landlords must be brought to reason, and thought, and principle, by the obligation to support their own poor. The occupiers would be benefitted—their expenses being shared more equally with the landlord; whereas the true incidence of the prevalent almsgiving was at present upon them. Instead of this indefinite expenditure, the occupier would now have one which he could estimate; and he would no doubt prefer laying out his money in improving his land to supporting men in idleness; and thus, further means of prosperity would be continually growing.—If Mr. O'Connell was right in saying that the Irish, with their love of uncontrolled freedom, would never enter the workhouses, well and good; since they could keep out of it

1835—40. only by maintaining themselves. If they did enter the workhouses, and idly stay there—well and good too; for this would relieve the immediate pressure of competition for potato grounds, and would afford opportunity for nominal rents to come down to the level of real ones, and some honesty might be introduced into transactions between landlord and tenant. A middle class might thus be growing up;—a class of improving small farmers, interposed between the landlord and the cottier, for whom there had hitherto appeared no alternative between a precarious and transient occupation of land and mendicancy. With the class of farmers must grow up a class of bonâ fide labourers. Thus would land and men improve together. There would be increased production from the land—classes of rising men upon it—a check upon the reckless increase of population—an influx of capital, which would cause further production and improvement; and so on. Such was the expectation of the advocates of an extension of the English poor law to Ireland: and they added that no country ever afforded such favourable circumstances for the establishment of a poor law as Ireland did at that time.

View of Opponents.

As for the opponents of the measure—they dwelt upon the peculiarities of the Irish mind, religion, and social state. This was their ground. They would have had Ireland assisted by a legal charity in regard to the sick and infirm, and to a large scheme of emigration. Further than this they believed the system would not work; and they declared their expectation that the legal charity would be found not to supersede at all the pious almsgiving which had become the religious habit of the Catholic districts. No one seems to have spoken out about the deep underlying mischief which might too probably frustrate all efforts and mortify all expectations. The land was the broad basis on which this great structure was to be founded: and while the title to, and possession of, that land was insecure, this foundation was no better than a shaking bog. In some districts in the West of Ireland, nine-tenths of the population were without means of living in winter. The expectation was that a poor law would force the landowners to employ the people, in order to escape so enormous a charge as the poor-rate. Landowners elsewhere, whose past and future were ascertained and secure, might venture upon such a work, in the strength of unquestionable possession: but not so men who had grown up in the recklessness of insecurity, and to whom the future was merely a scene of chance. It was fearful enough that the proportion of paupers to the rest of society was twice as large as in England, while the pauper maintenance fund was, in proportion, little more than one-third: and when to this grave fact is added the consideration of the insecurity of the landed property itself which is the basis of the whole, the wisest men, and most philosophical economists, may be excused for doubting whether the English poor law would work in Ireland.

1836.

History of the Measure.

When the Board of Commissioners of Inquiry recommended, in their Report of 1836, a legal charity for the support of the sick and infirm, and for the promotion of emigration, the British parliament and statesmen were not disposed to agree to the suggestion. To take off the weight of the able-bodied from the fund of voluntary charity was the first object; and, while the land was so badly tilled, it might prove no kindness to Ireland to remove her strong men to the colonies—if even arrangements for the purpose could have been, at that time, made. It was determined by the Ministers to send Mr.

Nicholls, one of the Poor Law Commissioners, to Ireland, as the man fitted above all others to view the state of Irish society with the eye of science as well as of compassion. Mr. Nicholls's commission bore date the 22nd of August, 1836; and, after an inquiry of little more than six weeks, he prepared a very able Report, which favoured the introduction of the English poor law into Ireland. It is well known that inquiry is immeasurably facilitated by such science and practical habits as Mr. Nicholls carried with him: and less objection was made to his Report, on account of the haste with which it was produced, than might have been expected. But it is also understood how partial and technical may be the observation and inferences of a man so devoted to a great and successful enterprise as Mr. Nicholls was to the administration of the reformed Poor Law in England; and it was a charge of the day against his Report that it showed him to have carried his conclusions with him, ready for use, if he found them applicable, and that his observation amounted to not much more than seeing what he was looking for. His Report, able as it would have been on an abstract case, able as it was on a partial case, was felt not to make sufficient allowance for so much of the peculiarity of the Irish character as depends on religious faith and guidance, nor to appreciate the hap-hazard character of the proprietorship of Irish estates. His view is derivable from one paragraph of his Report:—"Ireland is now suffering under a circle of evils, producing and reproducing each other—want of capital produces want of employment—want of employment, turbulence and misery—turbulence and misery, insecurity—insecurity prevents the introduction and accumulation of capital—and so on. Until this circle is broken, the evils must continue, and probably augment." The largest omission here is of the notification that the insecurity is owing to other causes than those specified. The unhinging of society which results from a long course of precarious holding of land is of a kind not to be rectified by a poor law, which proceeds on the supposition that the landlords are the secure owners of the soil, and therefore able, as well as liable, to support its burdens.—Considering the habit of mendicancy in the country, begging was no test of destitution; and the workhouse test was recommended to be strictly enforced. On a calculation that from eighty to a hundred workhouses would supply the requisite accommodation, the expense was estimated at from £700,000 to £800,000. If this amount were advanced as a loan from the imperial treasury, it might be repaid in annual instalments of 5 per cent. from the rates, with the interest—without any greater burden to the landlords and occupiers than was now imposed by the voluntary charity which came mainly out of their pockets at last. The payment of rates was proposed to be divided equally between the landlord and the occupier, by which it was believed and hoped that the landlord would find his burden heavier, and the occupier lighter than hitherto.—The new right of supervision over its members which would arise in society by the establishment of a right to maintenance was to be first manifested in the appointment of a warden or headborough, who would keep watch against the increase of destitution through fault, and the spread of mendicancy. Precautions were to be taken against a preponderance of magistrates at the Boards of Guardians, and no clergyman, of any denomination, was to be concerned in poor law administration during the prevalence of religious rancour in the country. It

Hansard, xxxvi. 465.

Hansard, xxxvi. 473.

1835—40. was thought best that the English board of Commissioners should extend their administration to Ireland, rather than that a separate Board should be established in Dublin; that the evils of inexperience and party suspicion might be avoided, and this new link in the union of England and Ireland be made as complete and sound as possible.

1837. The royal speech of 1837 recommended to parliament, in regard to Ireland, the consideration of "the difficult, but pressing question, of establishing some legal provision for the poor:" and on the 13th of February, Lord J. Russell brought forward the Irish Poor Law Bill. It was founded on Mr. Nicholls's Report; and it was sustained as very few measures of consequence are in the House of Commons. Sir R. Peel and Lord Stanley supported it, in its general provisions, and scarcely any one was found to object to it as a whole. It was proceeding favourably through Committee when the death of the King deferred its passage for another session.—By that time, some change of opinion had taken place, and much more opposition than before was offered by many persons besides Mr. O'Connell. Some had fears about the patronage of the Board, in a country so sensitive and on the watch for injury as Ireland now was. Some desired a voluntary assessment by the clergy, for purposes of outdoor relief, in addition to the provisions of the Act. And some brought forward their estimates of the population and of the rental, and of the proportion of these in certain districts; and, disbelieving that voluntary charity would cease, showed plainly, as they thought, that Ireland could not support a Poor Law of this nature. The minorities were, however, small. Mr. O'Connell's question, "Whether English gentlemen would force on the country a measure which the people rejected?" was answered by a majority of 175 in favour of the Bill.—In the Lords, the Opposition was strong—in speeches, at least, if not in votes. With people outside, this told rather in favour of the measure than against it, as it seemed to show dread of increased burdens by the landlords. Besides the Londonderrys, Rodens, and Lyndhursts, whose opposition had been expected, there were Lords Fitzwilliam, Clanricarde, and Brougham, who declared their expectations of entire failure in the working of the Bill.—The Ministerial majorities were, however, large; and the Bill became law in July, 1838.

Hansard, xxxvi. 4.

1838.

Hansard, xlii. 715.

Hansard, xliv. 28.

In August, the Commission met, and appointed Mr. Nicholls to carry out the Act in Ireland. He went to Dublin, with sufficient assistance for beginning his arduous work. By the 9th of October, the Assistant-Commissioners had returned from their circuits in the provinces, and were joined by more assistants from England. They went into deliberation, and arranged their system in all its details. By the 25th of March following, twenty-two Unions were declared; and in eighteen of these, guardians were appointed. Preparations for others were in great forwardness; and something more important still was effected. By the spread of the information furnished by the Commissioners, much of the local unpopularity of the measure was converted into support: and where support was not given, there was usually acquiescence. . . . In the course of the next year, 127 unions were declared, and only 3 remained to be formed. Fourteen workhouses were already opened for the reception of paupers; and the Commissioners declared their confidence that the great scheme would work well for the redemption of Ireland.—The reception of it

1839.

Annual Register, 1839, p. 300.

1840.

Its early Operation.

by the beggars was curious, as might have been expected by those acquainted with Irish mendicancy in its prosperous days, when it was not, as now, the outward sign of insufferable misery, but rather bore a gay and convivial character. One beggar proudly told a Commissioner that he would have little business but for the like of them:—another, unwilling to surrender a poor idiot to legal charity, and fearing to be "lonesome without him," though finding him "mighty teazing," thought it a good thing to be an idiot, to enjoy the roving freedom of the class:—another, who hated the "new jail," as she persisted in calling the Union house, found her business of mendicancy destroyed by the new agency—would have gone into the house if she could have enjoyed there her tea, and whiskey, and tobacco; but, as she could not, took upon her to despise the house, and declared that she would work rather than enter it. The great consolation of this class was in finding "the hard man" compelled to contribute to the support of the poor; while they felt grief and shame at what they considered the demoralization of the charitable, who now began to inquire into the case of mendicants, and ask why they did not go into the house. There was a perceptible diminution in the crowds of beggars on the roads, and in the villages; and in the towns, the avowal was made that the workhouses had weeded them of very destitute cases. When the "starving seasons" came round, (the interval between the complete consumption of one potato crop and the harvest of another,) it was evident that more work had been done, and more providence exercised. The early operation of the Irish Poor Law was pronounced to be decidedly successful. But it was too soon yet for the warmest advocates of the measure to pledge themselves that it would work the redemption of Ireland.

Hall's 'Ireland,' i. 7.

ii. 23.

iii. 354.

iii. 352.

RESIGNATION OF LORD NORMANBY.

The immediate consequence of the debates on the virtues or vices of the Whig administration of Ireland was the resignation of Lord Normanby on the first convenient occasion—in the spring of 1839, when he became Colonial Secretary for a few weeks, and then went to the Home Department. His policy was continued by his coadjutors, and by Lord Ebrington (soon after Earl Fortescue) who succeeded him in the Viceroyalty. His retreat from Ireland did not pacify the Opposition. In the session of 1839, the attacks on his government were renewed in both Houses of Parliament. In the Commons, Lord J. Russell met them by moving a Resolution, on the 15th of April, that it was expedient to adhere to the principles of government which had been of great recent benefit to Ireland. Sir R. Peel moved antagonist Resolutions, that it was inexpedient so to pronounce while the Lords' Committee of Inquiry was still engaged upon its work. These last Resolutions were voted down by a majority of 22. In the Upper House, Lord Brougham moved, on the 6th of August, and triumphantly carried, a set of Resolutions condemnatory of the Normanby policy—particularly as regarded the administration of justice and the extension of mercy. The Ministers were left in a minority of 34, in a House of 138.

Hansard, xlvii. 4.

Hansard, xlix. 1381.

WHIG GOVERNMENT OF IRELAND.

The opinion of the country, however, sustained the Irish administration; at least, in its general principles. The prevalent impression, throughout the nation, was, at the time, that the country had never before been so well governed: and there were many who believed that the redemption of Ireland had at length been entered upon. If this has been disproved by the lights of

1835—40. painful experience—if it now appears that the deep underlying mischief was unrecognised as a fatal obstruction—the Whig administration of Ireland may nevertheless have been an inestimable boon. It is the way with human affairs that enterprises often fail of their express aims, but never of producing important collateral effects. The Normanby administration did not redeem Ireland; but it proved before the eyes of all men a truth which must be understood before Ireland can be redeemed. It proved that no political government—the justest, the wisest, the most considerate—can rectify evils which are social, and not primarily political. The friendly rulers of Ireland, between the years 1835 and 1840, were not to have the privilege of redeeming her: but they did much to prepare the way; and they removed a great obstruction in extinguishing all just complaint of English misgovernment. Many other obstructions remained which rendered the work of effectual renovation impossible till a higher power than lies in human hands had cleared the way in a manner which it makes the stoutest heart tremble merely to contemplate. It is because this has happened—because the wide sweep of misery has left it clear that the maladies of Ireland are social, and not political—because the great underlying mischief has been heaved up to the surface by the convulsion—because every one now sees what must be done before Ireland can be redeemed—that we may speak of the hopefulness and cheerful composure with which the spirit of history may review the scenes and struggles of the past. The work now lies open; and the national gaze is beginning to contemplate it. A great work never waits long for the workman; and a greater work than this never presented itself to the human heart and hand. In an advanced age of the world—in the day of high civilization—here is a nation—full of noble qualities, however corrupted—to be taught how to live;—taught from the beginning—led up from a condition of passionate and suffering immaturity into the strength of self-disciplined, industrious, healthful, and prosperous manhood. If it be true that a great work never waits long for the workman, the day of the redemption of Ireland cannot be far off.—When it comes, the nation will not altogether forget "the things that are behind" in "pressing forwards to those that are before." It will not forget that the experiment of a strenuous administration of justice and mercy was once tried; and that it afforded the needed proof that any political administration was a means too small for the redemption of Ireland.

CHAPTER VII.

1835—38.

CHURCH AND STATE.

DURING the political changes and struggles of the period under review, few may have perceived the close connexion which is now clear to us between the disturbed state of the Church and the transitional character of the State. The difficulties that successive governments had in dealing with the religious bodies of the empire, appeared to many a mere coincidence with the death-struggles of parties, and not, as they truly were, another aspect of the same conflict. The Ecclesiastical disturbance visible at once in England, Ireland, and Scotland, was as inevitable a sign of the times as the passage of the Reform Bill, or Municipal renovation. It was a misfortune to all parties concerned, that the rulers of the State—too ill-prepared for action on the subjects most prominent in their own eyes—were absolutely incapable of intelligent government on ecclesiastical affairs. Their want of knowledge, their inability to comprehend or apply the principles concerned in the ecclesiastical disturbances of the time, were clear enough in the cases which have been already before us; but the complete exhibition of their incapacity took place in reference to the Church of Scotland.

As a preparation for the great scene of the disruption of the Church of Scotland, which will come before us in the final period of this history, we must look into the transactions of Lord Melbourne's government with that Church. We shall see how unaware the Ministers were of what they had to do, and what they were doing; how little they understood the true importance and real bearings of the case. They took no warning by the refusal of the English Tractarians to acknowledge the control of the government in church matters: they took no warning from the united cry of the High Churchmen and Dissenters for a dissolution of the union between Church and State. As Lord Grey had stared with amazement at the Nottingham deputation, so now Lord Melbourne scarcely took pains to observe whether it was the Church or the Dissenters in Scotland who wanted more accommodation and instruction: and neither of these ministers, and no one of the coadjutors of either, seems to have had the remotest idea of its being his business to understand, and decide, and act, on a question as important as any that had risen up since the Reformation. And the English public knew and felt no more than their rulers. They did not recognise the struggle that now set in, north of the Tweed, as one which will be conspicuous in all future histories of the progress of Opinion—which now means nothing less than the history of human liberties. Even now the greater number of readers and listeners turn away at the first mention of the Scotch Church, in hopelessness of understanding the controversy, or caring about the parties engaged in it. Those who have, from any cause, been interested in the case, believe that its principal features may be clearly and rapidly sketched. At all events, the attempt must be made in a history of the period.

Church of Scotland.

Its Constitution.

Its Failures.

Severance not Dissent.

The Scotch Church appears to be the best in which to contemplate the rise and progress of the conflict between the principles of the connexion or disconnexion of religion with the State, because it has ever been peculiarly hard to Scotch churchmen to admit the idea of dissent, and to undergo the process of severance from the Establishment. The Scotch Church was designed to be a spiritual republic, whose four judicatories, rising one above the other in gradations of power and authority, were still all elective. The Session, the Presbytery, the Synod, the General Assembly, were all of a representative character, and were assumed to be chosen by the popular voice. This popular election was for a very short time, if ever, a truth; and the same may be said of the unity of faith presumed to be secured by the Establishment. While the Elders and landed proprietors were in fact managing the appointments to office in the Church, many pastors were preaching doctrines which would not bear a comparison with the standards of the Establishment. The General Assembly wished for quiet—dealt gently with heresies—and would have been pleased to hear nothing of that great question of Patronage which was, in little more than a hundred years, to explode the Church as a national establishment. But the people found themselves under a despotism, from the unresisted nomination of the clergy by the patrons. The clergy nominated the elders; and the flocks had really no part whatever in the spiritual republic, where all were declared to be members of one body. The Assembly would not hear of a word of discontent, even from their own members: so the natural consequence followed:—the discontented took other measures to make themselves heard. One of them, the courageous Erskine, preached out the state of things from the pulpit—was censured, first by the local Synod, and then by the General Assembly—offered a remonstrance, and was expelled from his pulpit, as were three other clergymen, who had supported his remonstrance. In a century after, these four ministers had become four hundred. But they and their flocks were not Dissenters. They were compelled to separate from the organization of the Establishment; but they held all its principles—claimed the honour of being the real Church party in the case, and imitated the proceedings of the Establishment wherever they possibly could, without falling into its corruptions. In our own time, these claims have been allowed; and the Secession has been declared eminently conservative of the veritable Church of Scotland.

Patronage.

Another body of Seceders, who were driven out also by tyranny, were equally far from being dissenters. When a patron nominated for Minister a man unacceptable to the great body of the congregation, the Presbytery refused to ordain him. This happened so often as to be embarrassing to the General Assembly. The Assembly appointed the celebrated "Galloping Committees," as they were nicknamed; committees who went about doing the work which the Presbyteries refused. Fired by the ridicule cast upon these committees, and by the taunt that the highest power could not control the presbyteries, the Assembly determined to try its hand at coercion. The Assembly enjoined obedience: a member of a presbytery, Mr. Gillespie, evaded it: he was deposed: and he gathered together, outside the walls of the church from which he was driven, a body of men opposed to the existing despotism in the appointment of Ministers, and, after 100 years, was recorded as the founder of 120 congregations, constituting the Relief body, as it was called—a body claiming relief from the despotism of Patronage. These men also were thus not dissenters. They had no fault to find with the church, but only with the perversion of one of her arrangements.—At the end of a century, however, from the secession of 1734, the two bodies were called by others, and called themselves Dissenters, their ministers having, for the most part, adopted the voluntary principle. The establishment at this time had between 1100 and 1200 churches; a clergy of whom the Moderator of the Assembly at that date said that the whole were of Tory politics, except about six; and for supporters, it had the great body of the affluent and powerful throughout Scotland. The Dissenters had 700 churches, a clergy of liberal political opinions, and for supporters a great body of the labouring and some of the middle classes of society in Scotland. When Scotch Borough reform removed the oppressions under which this great body had lain, and opened to them a career of civil equality with the church and Tory party, they bestirred themselves to extend their principles and increase their numbers; and the newspapers of the time tell of the formation of many associations for the promotion and support of voluntaryism in religion.

Dissent.

London and Westminster Review, April 1833, p. 113.

Thus was the ground of controversy wholly changed. The Secession and Relief bodies had complained of tyranny within the pale of the church. Now, become Dissenters, they pronounced against the union of the Church and the State. The church had once ejected discontented members from her own household. Now she felt called upon to wage war with a vast body of Dissenters: and the time was coming when she must sustain such another Secession as must reduce her to a state of forlorn inferiority which she could not at present conceive of.

What did she do while the Dissenters were associating for the promotion of the voluntary principle? There was no time to lose; for a petition was sent up to parliament, in 1837, in favour of a total separation of Church and State, signed in Glasgow by 41,000 people. The church resolved on church extension; and that as much of the plan as bore on its opposition to the Dissenters should be kept in its own hands. It was necessary to request and obtain the assistance of the State, or a troublesome reference might hereafter be made to the sufficiency of voluntary effort on the present occasion: yet, if the matter were left to government, new churches would be built in far-away places, in country districts yet unprovided, and last of all, or never, in streets of towns where Dissenters' chapels existed already; whereas, it was the very thing wanted to plant a church beside every chapel, in order to put down dissent. Dr. Chalmers avowed that his demand should not stop short of a church for every 1000 inhabitants, sooner or later; and he did not promise to stop short of a church for every 700. On this estimate, and by virtue of ignoring dissenting chapels altogether, and reckoning the Dissenters among the inhabitants destitute of religious guidance, a strong case of spiritual destitution was made out, while nothing more was asked of government than to endow the churches which the establishment was willing to build. The consequence of the demand was that the government was at first favourable, partly from ignorance of the state of the case, and partly through dread of the evident extension of the doctrine of Voluntaryism; the Dissenters quitted that question for a time, to

Resort to Church Extension.

1835—38.

unite their forces against the imposition of burdens for a church which they disapproved; and the Church grew prouder than ever in the prospect of success. Her own subscriptions for new churches, subscriptions paid in by all manner of members—from the purely benevolent who desired the spiritual benefit of the poor and forsaken, to the haughtiest who could not tolerate the Dissenters—in two years amounted to upwards of 200,000*l.*

Hansard, xlii. 151.

1835.

Disposition of Government.

The successive Ministries of Sir R. Peel and Lord Melbourne saw nothing in the application, till the excitement they caused all over Scotland told them to the contrary, but a proposal to provide religious guidance for the destitute; an object which naturally appeared to them unquestionable. In the King's Speech prepared by the Peel Cabinet, in February 1835, we find this paragraph:—"I feel it also incumbent upon me to call your earnest attention to the condition of the Church of Scotland, and to the means by which it may be enabled to increase the opportunities of religious worship for the poorer classes of society in that part of the United Kingdom." For two years before this, Lords Melbourne and Brougham (then Lord Chancellor) had given deputations from Scotland to understand that they were favourable to the object of the Church—no question had been raised in the debate on the Address in answer to the Royal Speech—and the Dissenters found it necessary to bestir themselves to make known the opinion of a vast proportion of Scotchmen that such a grant was needless and dangerous. By the month of May, the Melbourne Ministry had learned that the question involved more than people in London had supposed; the Lord Advocate of Scotland moved for a Commission of Inquiry into the need: and on the 1st of July, Lord J. Russell appended a proposal to inquire what funds might exist in connexion with the Church of Scotland which might be rendered available, so as to obviate a donation from the public purse for objects which a large body of the contributors to the public purse conscientiously disapproved. In the proposal of a Commission Sir R. Peel acquiesced, on the ground that the session was too far advanced for a parliamentary Committee to effect any thing that year.

Hansard, xxvi. 67.

Hansard, xxix. 138.

Commission of Inquiry.

The Commission was sent forth to its work without delay; and great was the clamour about its constitution. All its members but one were Churchmen; and that one was as obnoxious to the Church party as the others were to the Dissenters. The high officials of the Church doubted the fealty of some of the Church members in the Commission; and on the last day of July, the Assembly, by their Committee, addressed a remonstrance to the government on the constitution of the Commission. No answer was returned; and on the 13th of August, 90 out of 93 members of the Assembly, met for the purpose, renewed the remonstrance. When questioned in the House of Lords, Lord Melbourne answered, with his wonted speculative optimism, that a Commission which pleased nobody must be a very good one, in times when party spirit ran high: and that it was a fine thing for men of extreme opinions, like one of the Commissioners, who had written a book against Establishments, to be put upon such work as this, as he was pretty sure of growing wiser, and learning to take more moderate views; and then, the vigorous talents which such men ordinarily possess would come into action for the public service.—The deepest offence to the Church was (after the proposal to inquire at all) the direction to the Commissioners to inquire into the amount of "unexhausted

Hansard, xxx. 1078. 9.

Teinds.

teinds;" that is, of tithes possessed by landowners, over and above the amount actually expended in their respective neighbourhoods for the support of the Church. In 1707, it had been settled, after much controversy, that the officials who administered Church affairs might enlarge stipends, but not erect or endow any new parish without the consent of three-fourths (in value) of the landowners. This arrangement was seen at the time to be so far questionable as to cause a provision to be made that parliament might alter it at pleasure. It was now reasonable to inquire into the working of this arrangement, if there really was a deficiency of church accommodation throughout the country. But a cry about the intended spoliation of private property was made; a cry so loud as to induce Lord J. Russell to publish, in a letter to the Head Commissioner, Lord Minto, a disclaimer, in the form of an instruction, not to give occasion for any charge of meddling with private property. Still, the unexhausted teinds had been regarded since 1707 and longer as private property guaranteed by an express law:—the holders foresaw the proposal to repeal the Act of 1707, and exclaimed against the devouring rapacity of the Church—the Dissenters protested loudly against any further endowments from the State, under any pretence whatever; and denied, in this case, any pretence of necessity at all:—the Churchmen were offended that parliament had not made them a grant at once, without dispute; and they protested against all inquiry into the workings of their Church organization, and the amount of their funds.—There was yet another cause of offence.—The class of tithes called Bishops' teinds must be dealt with separately. They were appropriated by the Crown at the Reformation—bestowed on the bishops while episcopacy existed in Scotland—and resumed by the Crown on its abolition. When stipends fell short from the parochial teinds being exhausted, the deficiency was made up from the bishops' teinds; but in no other way had the Church of Scotland any claim upon that fund. It had now become the property of parliament, together with the other patrimonial property of the Crown surrendered by William IV.; and the general public, as well as the Scotch Dissenters, protested against any appropriation of this national fund to purposes of Church extension in Scotland—even before it was ascertained whether such extension was needed. Thus, the Commission was as unpopular on every hand as any Commission could well be.

London and Westminster Review, April, 1838, p. 110.

Annual Register, 1835, p. 321.

Bishops' Teinds.

Hansard, xlii. 119.

In his official letter, Lord John Russell expressed a hope that the greater part of the business would be completed within six months;—that is, in readiness for the session of 1836: but this was not possible. In 1837 and 1838, three Reports were before the government—on the religious instruction provided for Edinburgh—and for Glasgow—and on teinds. They relate that Dissenters were more numerous than Church members in Edinburgh and Glasgow, and, especially, the most earnest and steadfast class—the communicants:—that the less opulent Dissenters had provided much larger accommodation than the more opulent Establishment:—that the Church accommodation in Edinburgh exceeded the legal standard:—that it fell short of that standard in Glasgow; but still went far beyond the existing need, as there were, as in Edinburgh, 20,000 unlet seats—for the most part of the cheapest order. As for the teinds—some of the unexhausted ones were held by landowners who were Dissenters; and it must require great consideration before these could

Reports of Commissioners.

1835—38. be taken from the holders for purposes of church extension. As for the amount, it fell but little below the sum of the actual stipends; and it was evidently a very serious matter to think of nearly doubling the revenues of the Church by taking funds out of the hands of private holders, some being Dissenters, to whom they had descended as property guaranteed by law for more than a century.

1837. ELECTION STRUGGLES.

When the excitement caused by this inquiry was at the height, the elections of 1837 occurred. The Church party, animated by the clergy, strained every nerve to drive out the ministerial candidates, in hope of giving a finishing blow to the weak and unpopular Whig government, and bringing in men who would give them Church extension and a triumph over the Dissenters. The Dissenters strove as earnestly on the other side;—not from any call of trust and gratitude for what the Whig government had done, but in the hope that their timely aid now, in conjunction with the information of the Report—so strongly in their favour—would procure serious attention to their case. But for the Dissenters, the Whig candidates would have been excluded from all the principal places in Scotland. It was hoped now that the prodigious excitement manifested during the elections would give the Ministers some hint of the importance of the next move they might make. The evidence was before their eyes that the Scotch Church was a failure in its character of a Missionary Church, and therefore not entitled on that ground to aid from the community generally, or at the expense of the Dissenters, who were doing her missionary work without aid from any quarter. The worst district in Edinburgh had, at that date, six times as many ministers as the average of Scotch towns; and yet, out of a population of 25,000, only 1070 church seats were let to the inhabitants of the district. The Report of the City Mission also disclosed appalling facts of the vice and wretchedness of whole districts where the Church was a mere name, and the whole work was left to the zeal and charity of Voluntaries. Yet, in the face of these facts—in full view of the extraordinary excitement which pervaded all Scotland—the vast public meetings, the gatherings of synods and societies for the protection of religious liberty;—in the full hearing of warnings from all England and from Ireland of the serious consequences of a government pledging itself to Church extension at a period when the final struggle of our Established Churches for existence had manifestly begun—in the midst of circumstances as serious as these, Lord J. Russell confirmed the agitating rumour which had been abroad since the elections, that the government was going to pledge itself to Church extension in Scotland. Subsequent events proved—what indeed few ever doubted—that the Ministers did not know what they were doing. The universal excitement on ecclesiastical subjects was inexplicable to them. Their training and position did not enable them to enter into the importance of the question of Church Establishments to the great middle class in both England and Scotland, who understand the principle of it perhaps better than any other which ever comes before the government. The Ministers did not see that a second Reformation might be the consequence of even a single ministerial act at such a juncture; and so they went intrepidly on, plunging into a matter which they did not understand—to the amazement of men on both sides in the quarrel. Such inability of statesmen to enter fully into religious questions—

IMPOTENCE OF THE CHURCH.

Scotsman, Oct., 1836.

GOVERNMENT FAVOURS CHURCH EXTENSION.

1835—38.

while not surprising—is a strong argument on the side of the opponents of the union of Church and State: and it was so used, at this date, by the Tractarians on the one hand and the Dissenters on the other: and there was nothing in the condition of any of the three Establishments to shame the plea. In the English Church, the prelates, the clergy generally, and the popular body in the Church, were parting asunder, with mutual reproaches of tendency to schism and unseemly disturbance. The dreadful position and reputation of the Protestant Church in Ireland was a subject so familiar as to have become wearisome; and now, the Scotch Church had challenged her adversaries to a conflict which was to end in her hopeless humiliation. Yet the Ministers remained unconscious of the gravity of the occasion. Lord Melbourne and Lord J. Russell said irreconcileable things on the same night in the two Houses: and, when they had compared notes, and come to an agreement what to state, it was that they proposed to extend the endowments of the Scotch Church. For this object, they intended to repeal the Act of 1707, with regard to the unexhausted parochial teinds, permitting certain authorities to divide the parishes, and give the teinds to Church purposes. At the same time, large parishes in the Highlands or elsewhere were to be endowed, from the Bishops' teinds or some other dues of the Crown. These teinds were now, as has been explained, national property, at the disposal of parliament. On the avowal of the Ministerial intention of giving them to the Scotch Church, a general cry arose—a question of where government would stop. If such aid was given to a Church which had proved a failure wherever its work should have been most vigorous, and whose need of aid was denied by a great majority of its own countrymen, what should not be done for England, whose metropolis exhibited more spiritual destitution than all Scotland together? Every one knew that if equal measure were dealt to the English Church, or any proposal of the kind mentioned, the destruction of the Church was inevitable.

Hansard, xli. 693, 702.

1838.

Indifference of Parliament.

There was not much in the aspect of parliament to gratify such Scotchmen as might be present at debates on the great subject. When Lord Aberdeen brought the matter forward, on the 30th of March, 1838, we find one speaker after another referring to the extreme thinness of the House; and Lord Aberdeen actually declaring himself wholly unable to comprehend what the excitement of the Scotch dissenters was about. They were not divided from the church by any disagreement in doctrine, but only by a hair's breadth, as it were, about matters of arrangement, in which he could not see that this question was concerned. "He assured their Lordships that not only had he never known anything like the interest which existed on this subject, but he verily believed that never had any question of domestic policy so much agitated the people of Scotland since the union of the two kingdoms." Lord Aberdeen did not see the meaning of the movement, any more than the Ministers. The debate was a melancholy and humbling one—a natural consequence of the hesitating mind and tentative action which the Ministry had manifested on this most serious subject. Lord Aberdeen's motion was for certain returns relative to the Church of Scotland. He stated the expensiveness of the Commission, assumed the duty of the government to afford supplies, through church establishments, to spiritual destitution, wherever it was pointed out; protested against the appropriations announced by the govern-

Hansard, xlii. 112.

ment, and declared them to be spoliations; and finally, taxed Lord Melbourne with breach of faith in first inducing the church to build places of worship on a pledge that government would endow them; and then refusing such endowment. Lord Melbourne's reply was indignant:—"I deny, in the strongest manner, in the most decisive terms, and in the most explicit language in which one gentleman can speak to another, that I ever entered into such an undertaking." And Lord Melbourne was clearly right. The churches were built or intended before any commission was issued; and the commission was one of inquiry into facts. But it was also clear that the Ministers had entered rashly upon a course which pledged them to the principles of Church extension; and this, in a case of eminently dubious claims: and that Lord Melbourne's speech of this night showed a considerable change and enlargement of view, which came too late.

Hansard, xlii. 151.

This question here merged into the yet more essential one which, in a few years, determined the fate of the Scotch church—the question of Patronage. When we arrive at the date of that story, more will be seen of the disastrous effects of the unconsciousness of statesmen of the vital importance of church conflicts, when the principles of religious liberty are in question. If the case is intricate—as in this instance of the Patronage question—it may be said that statesmen cannot be expected to enter into all its niceties. If so, it is a misfortune that the determination rests with them: for it is precisely upon the niceties of a question of principle that the decision ought to depend. Meantime, as early as June 1835, Lord J. Russell committed a grave mistake which showed how little he understood of what was involved in the question of Patronage.

IGNORANCE OF MINISTERS.

In May, the landowners of East Kilbride agreed to petition government to allow a trial of candidates for their pulpit. On the 14th, and again on the 21st, Lord J. Russell promised to consult the wishes of the petitioners. On the 6th of June, it appeared that the candidates were six: and this, as was immediately notified to Lord J. Russell, called for an interval of six Sundays before the choice was made. But on the 16th, the appointment of one of the candidates was gazetted; and it had been previously known in Glasgow. The remark of the reforming journal which relates the fact is, "Lord John, like most Englishmen, is ignorant of the peculiar position of the Scottish church, and the feelings of Scotchmen towards it."—The time was, however, approaching when the English, if they did not comprehend the church questions of Scotland, were impressively instructed as to the feelings of Scotchmen towards it.

Glasgow Argus, June, 1835.

CHAPTER VIII.

1835

THE great questions whose history has been detailed left little leisure to parliament for debates on subjects of more ordinary interest. The session of 1835 was declared at its close to be ingloriously remarkable for the small amount of business transacted: and during the next two, the topics which are usually brought forward every year in the expectation that they will be amply debated, were either omitted, or dismissed with brief notice.—The subject of agricultural distress is rarely absent from the records of any session; and we find it here, as usual. In May, 1835, the Marquess of Chandos moved for a repeal of the taxes which bore upon the agricultural interest. Every one admitted the distress—the low or fluctuating prices of produce—the uncertainty of the farmer's gains while his expenses were fixed, and, under some heads, increased: but the majority of the House agreed with Sir R. Peel, who doubted whether the best way of assisting the farmer was by reducing direct taxation: and unless this were certain, he thought it wrong to excite hopes which would probably be disappointed. The motion was therefore voted down by a large majority.—At the beginning of the next session, the complaints continuing, Lord J. Russell moved for a Committee of Inquiry, declaring that the long-continued or permanent distress of any interest was a proper subject of investigation; but he guarded himself from being supposed to promise or to expect relief to the agriculturists from anything that could be done or proposed through such a committee.—During its sitting, parliament was relieved from the discussion of the subjects usually introduced as the causes of agricultural distress—the currency, local burdens, and the corn laws. Mr. Cayley had rest from the labour of showing how it was the Bill of 1819 which occasioned agricultural distress, and how all would be right if we resorted to "a silver standard, or conjoined standard of silver and gold." The House would not agree to this the year before; and now the Committee would preclude its being brought forward again. The Marquess of Chandos would be spared his annual speech on the burdens on land; and the enemies of the corn laws could not do better than trust the cause of free trade to the evidence brought before the Committee. The continued pressure of agricultural distress was a stronger argument in favour of a repeal of the corn laws than any which could be uttered by the voice of any man: and it was certain to be corroborated by all the evidence which the Committee could call for.—The result was remarkable. The Committee "ended in nothing," as the disappointed said: that is, it presented the evidence, without any Report whatever. A Report had been prepared; and it was discussed at a meeting of twenty-five of the Committee, eighteen of whom called themselves emphatically the farmers' friends. These eighteen objected altogether to the Report, as certain to injure the cause of the suffering party, and

Agricultural Distress.

Hansard, xxviii. 92.

Hansard, xxxi. 147.

Committee of Inquiry.

Hansard, xxviii. 296.

Result.

1835.

Hansard, xxxv. 382, 384.

385.

insisted upon its suppression. They could not have done better for the objects of the free-traders. The reasons for their venturing thus to disappoint the expectations of the landed interest were looked for in the evidence, and easily found. The labourer was one part, and the largest, of the agricultural interest: and he was found to be in a state no worse than formerly, but considerably better than of late years. The other two classes, less numerous, united, than that of the labourers, were shown to be victims, not of the pressure of local burdens, but of fluctuations in the price of produce which kept the farmer in perpetual uncertainty about his profits, and the landowner about his rents. The Report would have stated these results: but its suppression, and the publication of the evidence on which it was founded, answered every purpose equally well. Familiar and wearisome as the subject is, it becomes more, instead of less, necessary to record complaints of agricultural distress as every year brings us nearer to the great settlement of the principle of agricultural commerce, that it may be clear how that settlement was both occasioned and justified by the sufferings of the landed interest, who might, according to their own annual complaints, gain by a change of system, but could hardly lose.

Finance.

The cry for the reduction of taxation was not on behalf of the agriculturists alone. Every year it was demanded; and every year the Chancellor of the Exchequer replied that government was reducing taxation as fast as it could, without needing the intervention of parliamentary committees, or other stimulus or assistance.—In 1835, there was no surplus, though considerable evidence of prosperity. The great fires in London and Dublin—the destruction of the Houses of Parliament and injury to the Dublin Custom House—occasioned unforeseen expense; and there were other unexpected charges: but the aspect of affairs was favourable enough to justify the reduction or repeal of a few small taxes; viz., the duty on flint-glass, now reduced from 6*d.* to 2*d.* per lb.; the reduction of the duty on spirit licenses, within a certain limit; and the repeal of the duty on awards in Ireland, whereby inducement might be offered to the poorer classes to settle their disputes in a cheaper manner than by going to law. It was found necessary to make an alteration in the tea duty, as well as in that on spirit licenses. Lord Althorp's methods rarely worked well: and in this case it was found necessary very soon to alter the tax on tea. Before the China trade was thrown open, there was a scale of *ad valorem* tea duties, charged according to the prices given at the sales at the India House. When teas might be sold in any shop, government fixed three rates of duty, corresponding with the qualities of teas, in the hope of thus subjecting the purchasers of low-priced teas to a low duty. Besides the temptation to fraud and the infinite trouble sure to be caused by this arrangement, it was soon found that the qualities of teas are not often distinct and distinguishable enough to afford an unquestionable basis for separate taxation. Teas of different value paid the same duty; and teas of the same value paid a different duty: the Custom House officers had in their hands, not only an irksome task, but a greater power of oppression than any tax could justify. The House agreed to the proposal of government; and it was resolved that from the 31st of July, 1836, the discriminatory duty should cease, and be succeeded by one of 2*s.* 1*d.* on all teas for home consumption.

Tea Duty.

Hansard, xxix. 488.

In 1835, an effort was made by Mr. Bulwer to obtain a repeal of the Stamp

1835.

Newspaper Stamp Duty.

Hansard, xxxiii. 670.

duty on newspapers. The Chancellor of the Exchequer did not defend the tax, which he admitted to be bad in principle and policy; but he must satisfy himself with pledging his testimony against the tax, and wait for a further surplus before he could undertake to repeal it. This was received as a promise to repeal the duty the next year. Between two-thirds and three-fourths of the duty was in fact remitted the next year. The 4*d.* stamp with discount was exchanged for 1*d.* stamp without discount. The reason why the remission was not complete was that a postage-rate must in that case have been imposed; and it was thought more convenient to all parties to retain a small stamp duty. This was a remission of taxation truly honourable to government, and beneficial to the people. A vast quantity of trash was immediately driven out of the market, and its place supplied by good newspapers. The lowest order of readers will always prefer what is superior to what is inferior, in political and social literature, as in every thing else, if both are made equally attainable; and it presently appeared that unstamped newspapers, got up by adventurers in defiance of law (however faulty the law might be), had no chance with the least-informed class of readers in the presence of more intelligent journals, now legally made cheap.

1836.

Hansard, xxxiii. 663.

Paper Duties.

Hansard, xxxiii. 671.

1837.

Budget.

The Report of the Chancellor of the Exchequer was prosperous this year—1836—for the last time for several years; for before the next session, the memorable seven years' distress of the manufacturing classes had given tokens of approach which were not to be mistaken. In 1836, the surplus would have been two millions, but for the payments to the West India planters. As it was, there was a surplus of £662,000, destined in the first place to the reduction of the paper duties, which were pernicious in many ways, and especially as affording incitement and occasion to extensive frauds. Writing paper had been paying a duty of 25 per cent.; printing paper, from 50 to 60 per cent.; and coarse paper, from 70 to 200 per cent. There was now to be a general duty of 1½*d.* per lb. on all sorts; and, as all paper paid duty, the secondary tax on stained paper was remitted altogether. Lord Althorp had repealed the duty on the insurance of farming-stock: and it was now proposed to extend the repeal to the insurance duty on farm-buildings. Some smaller taxes went also, as it was anticipated that there would be a large increase in the consumption of paper, and in the spread of newspapers, so as to obviate any ultimate loss to the revenue from the repeal of their respective duties.—In 1837, the surplus was less than £400,000; and the Chancellor of the Exchequer could only declare his own disappointment to be as great as other people's—show that his former reductions of duty had answered well—declare that the present adversity was owing to the commercial panic which had lately prevailed—and express his confident hope that the worst was past, and that he should have a more cheering story to tell next year.

Distress.

There was something irritating in the constantly hopeful and satisfied tone of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whom nothing could discourage or depress so far as to make him evince, at any time, the solicitude which seemed naturally to belong to his position, in a season of adversity. His *poco-curanteism*, joined with Lord Melbourne's, was too much for the patience of the suffering people during the terrible winter of 1836 and 1837. The harvest had not been a very good one; and in America it was so much worse that there was a

1837.

large demand for wheat from England, exactly at the time when the money relations of the two countries were in a fearful state. The potato crop had failed at home; and just when the cold of a severe winter was setting in, there was a complication of distresses which it might appal any minister to face. By the extraordinary action of the American President, General Jackson, upon the banks, there was a drain for gold from every country that could send away: and the stock in the Bank of England was lower than at any time since the passing of the Bill of 1819, except during the worst of the crisis of 1825. The prices of all articles but food were so low that manufactures seemed likely to stop for the winter; while, from the insufficient supply of food, and the drain from abroad for what there was, the price of corn and other provisions was rising from week to week. When the Bank took fright, and "put on the screw," the dismay was extreme, and nothing better was looked for than such a winter as that of ten years before.

Spectator, 1836, p. 1058.

During the preceding prosperity—during the three years of fine seasons, abundant harvests at home, and increased production of food in Ireland—speculation had revived, and had shown itself especially in the direction of banking. Now the time had come for looking into the matter—now, when the Bank of England had restricted her issues, and made the pain or numbness of the operation felt through every nerve of the commercial and manufacturing body of the nation. In the first seven years from the institution of Joint-Stock banking, thirty-four joint-stock banks were established. Nearly the same number rose up in the three following years—extending to the end of 1835. The average thus was, for the ten years, three new banks per annum. But in 1836, there were forty-two new ones set up, with branches which increased the number to nearly 200. During that year, the issues of joint-stock banks had increased nearly a million and a half. The branches in connexion with the joint-stock banks existing in 1836 were 670 in number; and the number of partners was upwards of 37,000. Of these banks more than three-fourths issued their own notes; and those that issued the notes of the Bank of England, in exchange for facilities in the way of discounts, were bound not to send up less than a certain amount of bills for discount; so that the local issues were thus put by the Bank out of its own power of control.—During the three years of fine harvests, the price of wheat had fallen from *55s. 5d.* to *36s.*; the abundance of food more than compensated to the working classes for the rising prices of other articles; and their condition was one of unusual prosperity. During the latter part of this period, the Bank of England increased its issues by a million, and other banks (in England, Wales, and Ireland) by three millions; and speculation became almost as mad as it had been ten years before. It was not till April, 1836, that the Bank began to contract its issues; and the drain of gold had already set in so as to induce the Directors to raise the rate of interest on discount to 4½ per cent. in July, and 5 in August. The joint-stock banks did not take the hint, as had been hoped, but actually increased their issues above 50 per cent. in the course of the year, during the greater part of which the Bank had been striving to stop the drain of gold which had reduced the stock of bullion to five millions. The panic which must come was foreseen by men of business through the summer. Its first manifestation was the failure of a great joint-stock bank in Ireland—the Agricultural and Com-

Joint-Stock Banks.

Stamp Office Returns.

Extension.

Porter's 'Progress,' &c. sec. iii. p. 221.

Tooke's History of Prices, ii. 300, 302.

Annual Register, 1837, p. 173.

Failures.

1837.

American Credits.

mercial—which, with its thirty branches, came to a stop in November. A general run upon joint-stock banks had begun, and in the north of England there seemed reason to fear a repetition of the miseries of 1826. To avoid this, and in fear for its own low stock of bullion, the Bank of England gave ample and rapid assistance—saving first the great Manchester Joint-Stock Bank—" the Northern and Central," and its forty branches—and in that, and by subsequent efforts, many others.—An untoward accident presently afterwards increased the public distrust in the state of commercial affairs. When the Bank of England raised the rate of interest on discounts, and had to lend to money-dealers who employed the loans in the discount of goods' bills, there was much surprise at the quantity of American paper that came in, disclosing the existence of an unsound system of credits carried on by six houses in London and one in Liverpool, which made advances on American account to an amount of not less than fifteen or sixteen millions at one time, while the means of meeting their liabilities did not altogether amount to so much as one-sixth of the whole. The Bank Directors sent orders to their agent at Liverpool to refuse the paper of certain American houses. By some strange indiscretion, the names of these firms got abroad. Though they fell into immediate discredit, these firms contrived to struggle on till the next March, when three of them, whose outstanding acceptances amounted to five millions and a half, suspended payment. The danger now was that other American houses must stop, whose liabilities, added to those just mentioned, would have amounted to nearly twelve millions. To avert so fatal a shock, the Bank sustained the three great houses till they had considerably lessened the amount of their liabilities. But such transactions did not confirm public confidence in England, and occasioned a further embarrassing reaction from America, where the consequence was nothing less than the knocking up of all the banks which had escaped the operations of President Jackson.

Parliamentary Committee of Inquiry.

Hansard, xxxvi 3.

Amidst such a state of affairs, it was not to be wondered at that renewed parliamentary inquiry into the principles and practice of banking was desired. A committee of inquiry into the operation of joint-stock banks had sat, with Mr. Clay as chairman, in the session of 1836, and had resolved, at the close, to present such evidence as had come before them, without declaring any doctrine or recommendation till the subject should have been prosecuted further. The royal speech of the 31st of January, 1837, emphatically recommended the subject to the earnest attention of the House of Commons, declaring that, while the best security against the mismanagement of banking must always be found in the integrity and ability of the managers, no legislative regulation should be omitted which can confirm the security.

Hansard, xxxvi. 155.

1 Vic c 73.
Joint-Stock Bank Acts.

On the 6th of February, the Chancellor of the Exchequer moved for the renewal of the late committee; to which the majority of the House eagerly assented. In the course of the debate, there seemed to be an almost universal agreement to express confidence in joint-stock banks, to praise their management under late difficulties, and to blame the Bank for various faults of conduct. The committee, however, found occasion to recommend large alterations in the arrangements of joint-stock banks; and these were embodied in an Act which became law on the 17th of July, 1837. By this Act, shareholders became liable for only the amount of their shares; and there could no longer be

1837.

7 & 8 Vic. c. 113.
Polit. Dict. i. 276.

an unrestricted nominal capital, or an imperfect registration of the names of shareholders.—A further regulation was carried out in 1844, by an Act which may be referred to here, as concluding the subject. By this Act, every new company is required to present a petition to the Queen in Council, signed by at least seven of the shareholders, praying for a patent of institution, and offering all the necessary details of the persons, the capital, the method of management, the locality proposed, and so on. The petition is then examined by the Board of Trade, and certified to be in compliance with the law. The deed of partnership is superintended by the Board of Trade. An unauthorized partner can now no longer bind the rest of the partners to any act; but only an authorized director. Joint-stock banks have now the right of suing and being sued.—The difficulties and dangers of banking are not removed by these Acts;—nor can be by any means whatever till the intricate subject of Currency—which includes many others—is absolutely understood by a few, and comparatively well by all parties immediately concerned. Meantime, we see in the records of the time a melancholy picture of popular ignorance extending to high places, while the consequent misery spread down to the lowest. One member of parliament thought that a silver standard would set all right;—another declared, in allusion to the cheerfulness of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, that Ministers were fiddling while the State was burning; that the distress of 1825-6 was not a millionth part of what existed at present; and that a paper currency, regulated by the demand, was the only cure;—one was for requiring incessant and minute returns from every banking establishment, for the sake of control by the Bank of England or the government; and another was opposed to all inquiry whatever till the "infant" joint-stock banks could show what they could do:—some were for making the Bank of England the only bank of issue:—others were for allowing no issues but by a National Bank, which should be responsible to the Crown and to parliament: and others again were for perfect free trade in money. Amidst these differences, men might be advancing towards knowledge; and parliament did something in improving the securities of joint-stock banks: but there was something melancholy and alarming in the sense and evidence of general ignorance which was pressed upon the thoughtful by the incidents of the time. It was within the period mentioned above that a Currency discussion took place at the Political Economy Club, at which three Cabinet Ministers attended as hearers, and where three or more chiefs of the science propounded their respective doctrines. The matter was gone into with all possible ability, earnestness, and temper; and no one complained of want of opportunity to state his doctrine fully. No one of these chiefs converted another; only one, if any, gave a general impression of being fully master of his subject; and no one could be declared to have settled the mind of any hearer. The three Cabinet Ministers listened in earnest silence, and committed themselves to no opinion. It is probable that they thought, like other hearers, that the subject, certainly fathomable, is as yet as far from being fathomed as any on which society is under the fate of proceeding from day to day, without being able to pause for wisdom to choose a path which might guide her clear of some terrible abyss a-head, instead of straight into it. We now know, only too feelingly, that the monetary crisis of 1836-7 was not to be the last.

National Registration.

One of the most useful and beneficial acts of legislation of this reign was that which gave the nation a Registration of Births, Marriages, and Deaths: and the year 1836 was that which introduced it. In noting the year of its origin, the mind is carried on to contemplate the spread of its consequences, which may indeed be fairly considered incalculable. The most obvious, though the lowest, consideration is the security of property given by the existence of an authentic and accessible record of the family events which govern the transmission of real property.—Another consideration, deeply felt by a large section of the people, was the removal of a tacit disgrace and disability from the Dissenters; a disgrace and disability never designed, but growing out of the fact that whatever registration existed was ecclesiastical and not civil. Not births, but baptisms, were, up to this time, registered:—no marriages but those which took place at the church of the Establishment, from which Quakers and Jews were therefore excluded:—no deaths but of persons who were buried by the clergy of the Establishment.—Again, here was a means of exploration into the whole of society which might answer many beneficent purposes, while it had nothing in it obtrusive or despotic. The numbers of the people would be known—their proportion to the means of education—their worldly condition, as indicated by the proportion of marriages—their sanitary condition, as indicated by the proportion of mortality, and the nature of the maladies which carried them off:—and, finally, here would be, always at hand, a vast body of statistical facts, out of which social reforms might be constructed, according to the speculations of the most thoughtful, and perhaps beyond the dreams of the most imaginative. In old times, the registration, being exclusively ecclesiastical, was one of the duties appointed expressly to the clergyman, on his entrance into his function; but it was used for civil purposes which caused it to be disliked, and consequently evaded, where possible. It was used for taxing purposes, as in the Act of 6 and 7 William III. c. 6, when duties were levied "on Births, Marriages, and Burials, and upon bachelors and widowers, for the term of five years, for carrying on the war against France with vigour." The most recent legislation upon the subject had chiefly provided for the security of the records—ordaining that the books should be made of parchment or strong paper, and kept in dry and well-painted iron chests. No conception of the importance of such a measure as a complete civil registration of the life, death, and domestic condition, of the whole people seems to have entered the mind of the nation till our own century; and that century will hereafter be regarded as honourable in which it was done.

Polit. Dict. ii. 625.

Marriage.

The improvement in the Marriage law connected with this measure has been specified before. Sir R. Peel introduced the sound principle of rendering marriage a Civil Contract, only so far obligatory by law, because the civil contract is all that the State has to do with; and the religious celebration is a matter of private conscience altogether. From the time of the passage of this Act, the business lay, as far as the State was concerned, between the Registrar and the parties intending to marry. The marriage might take place at the office of the Superintendent Registrar, or at any church or chapel registered for the purpose, without publication of banns, and in virtue of the Registrar's certificate that the provisions of the law had been complied with—the Regis-

1837. trar being present, and the certificate being delivered to the officiating clergyman, or the registering officer in any dissenting chapel or synagogue. If the parties are married at the Superintendent Registrar's office, that officer must be present, and another registrar, and two witnesses; the hours and open doors must be the same as in other cases, and also the declarations as to the absence of legal impediment. In the place of the former publication of banns, there was now to be a sufficient previous residence and length of notice—the publication of banns being henceforth confined to the case of members of the Establishment. By this Act, the Dissenters obtained a relief which it will hereafter be astonishing that they could have waited for so long; and the State began to practise the virtuous prudence of making marriage as accessible as it at present knew how, and consonant to the principles and feelings of the conscientious of every way of thinking.

Polit. Dict. ii. 323.

This marriage business occupied one of the two Bills brought forward by Lord John Russell on the 12th of February. The other provided for the registration of Births and Deaths. The guardians of the poor were to divide the parishes into districts which should be supplied with a sufficiency of registrars. The occupiers of houses were encouraged to give notice, within a certain time, of every birth and death that happened therein, with such particulars as the officers were authorized to ask. A fee on registration must be paid, after the lapse of the shortest term specified; and a heavier fee after further delay. Births and deaths happening at sea were to be registered by the captain of the vessel. Those who gave information of deaths were encouraged to present a declaration of the cause of death, in the handwriting of the attendant medical man. The registers were to be transmitted to London, to be kept in a central office, where access might be had to them, on payment of a small fee. It may be seen at a glance what a broad ground for sanitary improvement was afforded by this measure; how immediately the prevalence of certain diseases in particular localities must be made apparent; and how easy it must become in time to ascertain the most important conditions of life and health from a body of facts so large and so unquestionable as is afforded by a general register.

Births and Deaths.
Polit. Dict. ii. 626—628.

First Operation.

In the first year, the number of deaths registered amounted almost exactly to that which Mr. Finlaison, the actuary, previously said it ought to be. The marriages registered were fewer than could have taken place; and the births fewer still. The prejudices against the registration of births have been giving way ever since, and the returns are less unsatisfactory every year: but they are still defective; the births unregistered certainly amounting to some thousands every year. This is likely to be the last portion of the scheme which will work as it ought. By the end of 1838, the number of registrars amounted to about 2200; nearly half of whom were officers in poor law Unions. Of these, above 400 registered marriages, as well as births and deaths; and 400 more registered marriages only. The superintendent registrars were about 600. The total expense was estimated by the Ministers, when Lord John Russell introduced the measure, at about £80,000 per annum; and surely he was right in thinking that the money could not be better spent. This great institution, as it may be called, was one result of the reform of the poor law;

Hansard, xxxi. 371.

and if from it should arise a thoroughly effective scheme of sanitary administration, we may see in the New Poor Law a cure for other than "the great political gangrene of England."

Imprisonment for Debt.

Hansard, xxxiv. 1063.

In the session of 1835, a Bill to abolish Imprisonment for Debt had passed the Commons, but had reached the peers too late for any chance of becoming law that year. In 1836, the Lord Chancellor introduced a similar measure on the 30th of June: but, before the middle of July, when the vote for the second reading was to be taken, the Duke of Wellington settled, for himself and the House, that it was too late to proceed with a matter of such importance; and, though the Premier thought there was plenty of time, the Bill was dropped.—Some success was now, at last, obtained by those who had, for several sessions, attempted to obtain the benefit of counsel for prisoners on trial for felony. Twice had a Bill to this effect passed the Commons, and been obstructed or dropped in the Lords: but now the Criminal Law Commissioners had unanimously recommended that prisoners charged with felony should be allowed the advantage of counsel to address the jury in their defence; and the proposal came before parliament with a new sanction. The marvel of the case now is that there could have been any doubt about the matter: but there were still persons who were misled by the saying that the Judge was the prisoner's counsel—not considering how much there might be in the case which could never come to the knowledge of the Judge. Lawyers of all politics said this; some knew cases where innocent men had been sacrificed for want of legal aid; and all seemed to approve the principle of the Bill, while a few, as Lord Lyndhurst, objected to certain of the details. In treason trials, at one end of the scale of crime, and in trials for misdemeanour, at the other, prisoners had the benefit of counsel; but not in the intermediate range. No one among the Peers disputed the absurdity of this; and in Committee, only one amendment was made to which the Commons did not at once agree. But that amendment was of great consequence; and it seemed at one time likely to throw out the Bill for that year. The Bill gave the prisoner the last word. His counsel was to reply to the address for the prosecution, after the evidence was done with. Lord Abinger declared that he would oppose the Bill if this was in all cases allowed. The Lord Chancellor defended the provision: but was outvoted. The Commons were disturbed, and requested a conference: the Lords would not yield their amendments; and, sooner than lose the Bill altogether, Mr. Ewart, who brought it in, took what he could get, announcing that he should try for the rest another year.

Counsel for Felons.

Hansard, xxxv. 184.

Hansard, xxxv. 1325.

A new statute was passed this session which repealed the obligation to execute murderers the next day but one after conviction, unless the day should happen to be Sunday. The same discretion was now left as to the day of execution, as in other cases of capital conviction.—The powers of Coroners were enlarged, in the same session, by means of a provision for paying the expenses of medical witnesses, and enabling the Coroner to call for additional medical evidence, when required.

Hansard, xxxv. 715.

Coroners' Powers.

6 and 7 Wm. IV. c. 89.

New Houses of Parliament.

An interesting item in the business of parliament, since the great fire, had been the consideration how to provide a new House for the great Council of the nation to meet and work in. On request from parliament, a royal commission had been appointed in 1835, to receive plans by open competition for the

1837. rebuilding of the Houses. Out of more than ninety plans, four had been selected for further examination; and to choose among these was the business of the renewed committee of 1836. A debate was raised by Mr. Hume as to whether the site should not be exchanged for a spot more open and elevated —as, perhaps, St. James's Palace and Marlborough House: but, besides that certain conveniences were connected with the old site, much property had been bought, and many houses pulled down, for the purpose of the rebuilding on the same spot.

The opinion of the Committees of both Houses as to the choice of plan and architect, was made apparent in March by their proposal of an address to the King, to petition him to institute inquiries as to the probable expense of executing the plan of Mr. Barry. It was considered a great day for Art in England when such a work as this was thrown open to competition. Here was no despotism of rank or fame, in king or architect, to settle a matter in which the nation should have a share through its representatives; but, while the tribunal was as good an one as could have been found to meet all the needs of the case, its nature was a sort of invitation to the people to look upon the enterprise as business of their own, and learn from it, as we all do from enterprises of our own. It was worth the inconvenience and loss from the fire to give the nation such an exercise in Art and the love of it as the erection of the Palace of Parliament. The cost has far exceeded expectation, and is still heavy; and it has occurred during a long period of distress; but it is hard to say how the money could have been better spent than on an object so noble, so truly expedient, so plainly extending its benefits into a far future, as the erection of a building which will be to a future age what our old Abbeys and Cathedrals are to us now.—Mr. Barry's plan appears to have put all others out of sight at once—admirable as some of them were declared to be. One of its excellences was that there was a largeness and unity about its exterior plan which admitted of great modifications, according to circumstances and experience, of interior arrangements: but this advantage was not regarded as a merit by disappointed competitors and their advocates, but rather as a ground of complaint about changes and improvements, and departure from original proposals. If it required the courage of a hero to offer such a plan to a body so notoriously utilitarian as the British House of Commons, it required further the patience of a saint to endure being "hunted and pursued" as Mr. Barry was from the moment of the preference of the Committees being avowed, and with more or less intermission through succeeding years. But a man who works for ten thousand generations cannot expect perfect sympathy from the existing one. He ought to be satisfied with so much as enables him to do his work: and Mr. Barry has had much more than this. He might be satisfied with looking forward to future centuries, when men of an advanced order of civilization will pass through his imposing corridors and pictured halls, and pause before his magnificent tower, and swell with admiration, without any more dreaming of criticism than we do in pacing a cathedral aisle. The criticism appears to be of a more temporary character even than usual in this case—the most vehement being connected with the process of competition—presently done with—and much of the rest being about the proportions of unfinished work. All this will die away in a few years; and then the general

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appreciation of the achievement will begin. Meantime, the architect has been well sustained by admiration and sympathy.

The principle of competition is admitted also in regard to the sculpture and paintings to be deposited within. The present will be ever regarded as a memorable period for British sculptors and painters, as well as architects. They have been invited to open competition, so conducted as that every artist can show, before worthy judges, how far he is capable of conceiving and presenting the ideas and facts of the destiny and story of his nation. If there is genius among us, undeveloped, it will be brought out; and that which has already made itself known cannot but be animated by such an incitement. We may hope to see, in the new Houses of Parliament, the mind of our time stamped for the contemplation of the future, in the form of a history of the past: and if this is not done, it must be because we are not able to do it: for the opportunity lies open. Niches and pedestals are waiting for statues, and pannels for paintings; and all our artists are invited to come and try who is most worthy to supply both. If there are men to do it, it will be done: and that the case is such is a noble feature of the time.—A beginning of the great enterprise was made in 1837 by the formation of the embankment along the river side. It was three years more before anything of the character of the work could show itself; and then, when the east end appeared to the height of the first floor, every one was astonished to find how far the apparition transcended all expectation of it that could be caused by descriptions and drawings.

Admission of Ladies to Debates.

Hansard, xxix. 637.

In connexion with this building, an innovation on the proceedings of parliament was proposed in two successive sessions, and discussed at more length, and in a less creditable tone, than could have been expected. In July, 1835, it was proposed in the House of Commons that accommodation should be provided in the new edifice for the presence of women at the debates. The proposal was made in a spirit and in language which went far to place every sensible woman on the same side of the question with Lord J. Russell, when he declared his disinclination to debate the matter, and his intention to oppose the motion. Lord J. Russell was outvoted, however, and a Committee was appointed to consider the subject. The whole proceeding had much the air of an ill-bred joke;—the speech of the mover—the ostentatious eagerness to second it—the coarse mirth—and the large majority.—On the next occasion, May 3d, 1836, matters were worse;—the speeches more indecent—the mirth more flippant and unmanly—the majority larger in proportion. It seemed likely that the women of England might indeed be invited to be present at the deliberations of legislators whose method of invitation was an insult in itself, and who professed to wish for the presence of ladies (among other reasons) as a check upon intoxication and indecency of language. But the affair was happily put an end to by means chiefly of a serious and sensible reply from the Speaker, when asked for his opinion on occasion of a grant for a Ladies' Gallery being proposed. The grant was refused by a majority of 42 against 28.—As for the merits of the question when considered seriously, there was little difference of opinion. Those who advocated the admission of women in the gallery did not pretend to be thinking of the improvement of the women's knowledge, and the cultivation of their interest in subjects which concern every member of society—those who are waiting for political participation, as well as those

Hansard, xxxiii. 531.

Hansard, xxxv. 1078.

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who have it. Every one knew that serious objects like these are best accomplished at home, as the speeches of legislators are certainly much better in the newspapers than as they are spoken. If the proposition of a Ladies' Gallery had been carried, the place would have been found to be occupied almost exclusively by giddy and frivolous women, fond of novelty, and with plenty of time to lose;—a nuisance to the legislature, and a serious disadvantage to the wiser of their own sex—inasmuch as these triflers would be understood, from their very presence, to be representatives of the English women who take an interest in politics; while in reality, the latter class would be precisely those who would be reading and thinking at home. Whenever the time shall arrive when the legal position of Woman in England comes fairly under the eye of the legislature — a position so injurious as to extract from Lord Brougham the confession, in 1838, that the whole of the law was so atrocious as regards Woman, that there is nothing to be done but to leave it alone, and keep it out of sight as long as possible—it would be a serious disadvantage to Englishwomen to be judged of, as they inevitably would be, by such a sample as would have attended the debates on such an invitation as that of Mr. Grantley Berkeley and Mr. Villiers. As it was, the women of England gained something—in the way of warning how far they were from being respected by those who professed most regard for their political improvement: and the House of Commons lost much—in the way of character for sense and refinement. It had often exposed itself by the boyish passion and pot-house manners which had occasioned confusion within its walls: but it now outbid all former disgraces, and excited a disgust which was not likely to be forgotten. The simple-minded now knew something of the way in which some gentry talk when they get together—like to like. The simple-minded were shocked; but they were glad to know the truth, and resolved to bear it in mind.

Hansard, xliv. 779—784.

Privilege of Parliament.

Every one admits, as a general declaration, that no subject can be more important, in the deliberations of parliament, than the defence of its own privileges; yet the whole nation dislikes the subject, and is too apt to despise it. A troublesome and protracted and very serious conflict about the privileges of the Commons began in 1837. On the 6th of February, a petition was presented from Messrs. Hansard, the printers to the House, who stated, that in course of the ordinary, authorized sale of parliamentary reports and papers to the public, a Prison Report had been sold, in which was contained a statement given in evidence, that certain prisoners were found reading obscene works, issued by a certain publisher, whose name was given—J. J. Stockdale:—that Stockdale had brought an action for libel against Messrs. Hansard in the Court of King's Bench, laying his damages at £20,000: that Messrs. Hansard had pleaded in justification the sanction and authority of the House of Commons: that the Court of King's Bench had ordered the plea to be struck off the record: and that Messrs. Hansard prayed the protection of the House.

Hansard, xxxvi. 133.

The privilege of parliament was not involved in the act of disallowing the Hansards' plea; the disallowance being merely on the ground that the plea was unnecessary for technical reasons: and, on this opening occasion, no one dreamed that the privilege of parliament was in question at all. It was on occasion of the trial, the next day, that the controversy was raised. It was raised by Chief Justice Denman, who said that he was not aware that the authority of the House of Commons could justify the publication of a libel. In his charge to the jury, he repeated his opinion with strong emphasis; and the jury accordingly found, that though the book referred to was obscene and disgusting, the defendants were guilty of libel on the publisher. Within a week, the House took up the matter, and appointed a committee to investigate the question of privilege. On the 30th of May, Lord Howick moved Resolutions framed on the Report of the Committee, affirming that the House had full power to publish what it chose; that to bring the privileges of parliament into discussion before any tribunal but parliament itself, is a high breach of privilege: and that for any court or tribunal to assume to decide on the privileges of parliament, otherwise than as carrying out the decisions of either House thereon, is contrary to the law of parliament, and a breach and contempt of its privileges. Sir R. Peel supported these Resolutions, against a set, of a contrary purport, proposed by Sir R. Inglis: and those supported by the two parliamentary leaders were carried by a majority of 90 in a House of 162.

Hansard, xxxviii. 1113.

Hansard, xxxviii. 1121.

Hansard, xxxviii. 1134.

Here was the Court of King's Bench placed in direct and irreconcileable opposition to the House of Commons:—Lord Chief Justice Denman to the assembled representatives of the nation. It was no trifle—such a quarrel as this; and its issue was awaited with great anxiety by all who understood its bearings.

Weakness of the Administration.

There is nothing more to be said of the action of parliament during the reign. The Whig Ministers were not men of business. They conveyed the impression of doubt about the quality and practicability of their own measures; and this was, in fact, inviting the obstruction or demolition of those measures. Every session became, to the sensations of those concerned in it, more and more like a troubled dream, wherein the sufferer is for ever struggling to get on, and for ever in vain. By this time, the Ministers themselves had arrived at complaining that they could not carry their measures; and this provoked an inquiry, by no means spoken *sotto voce*, whether, in that case, they were fit for the very office whose business is to pass measures. They were obliged to endure, on occasion of the close of the reign, a speech of scornful reproach from Lord Lyndhurst, which they could not repel with answering scorn, because the Houses and the country knew that the taunts, though severely expressed, were mainly true. After showing that, at the end of a session of five months, only two measures of original importance had been passed, while seventy-five public bills were depending in the Commons, he declared, "Never was the state of business in the other House of parliament in the situation in which it was at present—never did a government so neglect so important a part of its duty, that which it had to discharge in parliament, as the government had done during the last five months. The noble Viscount and his colleagues were utterly powerless. They were powerless alike in that and in the other House: they were utterly inefficient and incompetent as servants to the Crown; and, he must add also, they were equally powerless, incapable, and inefficient, as regarded the people. . . . . . He could only say that almost every feasible and reasonable man had but one opinion;—but one idea was entertained regarding their conduct. It elicited the pity of their friends, and excited the scorn and derision of the enemies of their country. He gave them a picture of the pre-

Hansard, xxxviii. 1574.

1837. sent—he had also given them a picture of the past. What then were their hopes for the future?"

There is no need to accept the vaticinations of an enemy as to the future of the Whig Ministry, as events will presently show us what it was. As for Lord Lyndhurst's pictures of the past and present, they were hailed by some, excited a smile in others, and were openly resented by very few. They were too nearly true to be strongly impugned. The Premier protested vaguely against them, and went home placidly conscious that he was no nearer going out of office for any thing that Lord Lyndhurst could say. A new period, affording fresh chances, was now setting in, during which they might show what they could do. The Premier might now have less leisure and license than hitherto for blowing feathers, and nursing sofa cushions, and serenely swearing in the face of deputations: but he was entering on a new term of power, and was safe for the present—whatever sarcastic enemies, and wearied friends, and the indignant people, might say about the incapacity of the Melbourne Ministry to carry on the business of the country.

CHAPTER IX.

1837.

THE history of our Whig administrations is almost made up of obstruction on the part of their adversaries, and powerlessness on their own; but never were the Whig rulers reduced to more desperate straits than in the spring of 1837. They were supposed to have staked their existence on carrying their measures for Ireland; but they could not carry them. In the House of Lords the Tories cried out that the country was without a government; and the Radical members in the other House repeated the cry. The Ministers were believed to desire earnestly the dissolution of the parliament formed during the short Peel administration; but the King would not hear of it. The King was believed to desire earnestly the resignation of the Ministers; but the Ministers did not appear to think of giving up. It was a state of things which could not endure long. When the change came, it was not exactly in the way that had been looked for.

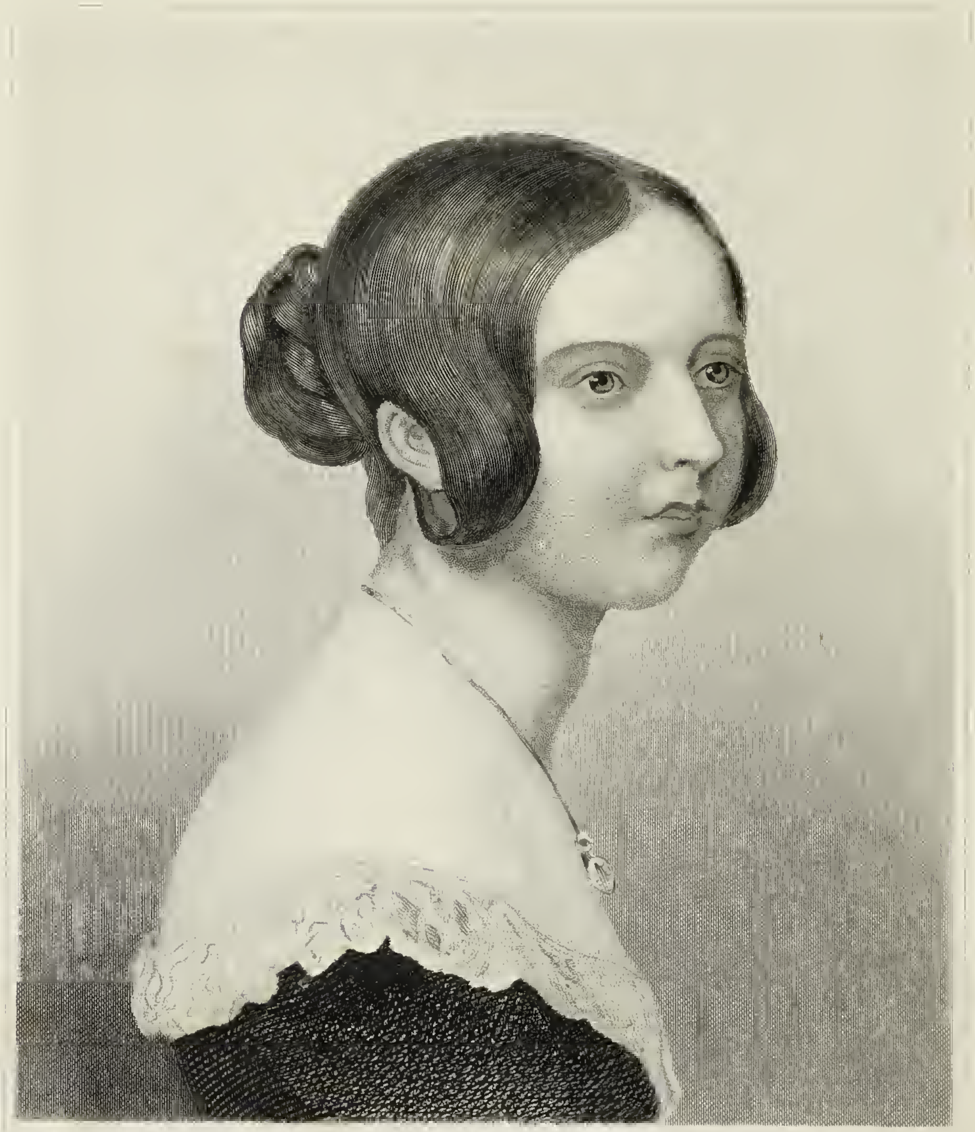
ILLNESS OF THE KING.

The King's health had been better for the seven years since his accession than for a long previous period; and he enjoyed a remarkable exemption from the annual attack of hay-fever (as it is called) which had before regularly come on in June. At the beginning of 1837, his family had observed that his strength was not what it had been; but he was upwards of seventy; and some decline might be looked for. When May came in, he appeared to be aging rapidly. On the 17th, he was seated at the levee, for the first time, and looked worn and feeble. On returning to Windsor, he had difficulty in mounting the stairs, and sat down on the first sofa. He held a drawing-room the next day; was again seated, and observed to look still worse; but he was less fatigued in the evening; and was in high spirits the next day—which was the anniversary of the battle of La Hogue. He talked a great deal about our naval warfare, and was carried away by the favourite subject of our victories at sea during the last century. He was stopped two or three times by difficulty of breathing, but went on again. The next morning, Saturday the 20th, he was much the worse for the exertion—could take no breakfast, and fell back fainting at lunch-time—and again at dinner. It was clear that evening that he could not go to town in the morning, to be present at the re-opening of the Chapel Royal. It was ten at night before he gave it up, and he then left the drawing-room, never to enter it again. On Monday and Tuesday, he saw the Ministers. On Wednesday, there was a grand ball at St. James's, given by the King in celebration of the Princess Victoria attaining her majority. The ball was none of the merriest, from the absence of the King and Queen; but the King sent tokens of his kindly sympathy. He presented the Princess with a magnificent pianoforte, as his birthday offering. He held a council on the Saturday; but was wheeled in a chair into the council-room, as he could no longer walk.—When June arrived, he and those about him called his illness the old hay-fever.

Annual Register 1837, Misc. 370.

1837. Whatever it was, it disappointed him of meeting the great parties he had invited for the Eton regatta on the 5th, and Ascot races afterwards. As he sat in his easy chair, breathing with difficulty and sinking in weakness, the kind-hearted old man thought of various things which might add to the pleasure and comfort of the Eton lads, and others of his guests below; and many were the orders he gave. He insisted on the Queen's going to Ascot on the race day, that there might be as little disappointment to the public as possible. She was not gone long; and when she returned, she observed a considerable change for the worse, in those two hours.—The dinner in St. George's Hall the next day was dull and sad: but there was talk of the King being removed to Brighton in the morning, when perhaps the sea air might revive him. When the morning came, he was too ill to stir; and the guests at the Castle all went away after breakfast. An extraordinary stillness prevailed; and now, the King's danger was freely spoken of there, and in London. The danger was supposed to be extreme; but he revived a little, and transacted some business with Sir Herbert Taylor the next day (the 9th), signing papers with much difficulty, but showing all necessary clearness of mind.

A bulletin was now first issued; but on the morrow, the King was so much better as to lead even his own attendants to think that the attack might be got over for the time. The improvement was, however, merely owing to medicines which temporarily relieved the breathing. During his severest suffering, he was eminently patient, thankful for kind offices, and ever cheerful: and when he was relieved, it became evident how great had been the suffering which he had borne so quietly. His spirits rose, and he was full of thanksgiving. He was fully conscious of his danger throughout, and, sincerely believing that, from the youth of the Princess Victoria, it was desirable that he should live some years longer, he prayed for life—not for his own sake, but for that of the country. He had prayers read very frequently; and they always revived him.—On the 13th, he chose to see the Hanoverian Minister on business; and, on the 14th, the Duke of Cumberland—he and they, no doubt, being fully aware that the connexion between the kingdoms of Hanover and England was hourly dissolving with his failing breath. Possibly, his desire to live ten years longer for the public good might have as much reference to Hanover as to Great Britain.—For a few days more he fluctuated between life and death—now appearing to be breathing his last, and then signing a paper or two as he could rally his strength for the effort. His last act of sovereignty was signing the pardon of a condemned criminal.—On the Sunday, he received the sacrament from the hands of the Archbishop of Canterbury; and he appeared to derive so much solace from the mere presence of the Primate, though unable to speak or to listen much, that the Archbishop remained in the room till late into the night.—The anniversary of Waterloo was always a great day with the King. The Duke of Wellington would not have held his usual banquet without complete assurance of the Queen's wishes: but the good old king's thoughtfulness settled the matter, the day before. He sent a message to the Duke, to desire that the dinner might take place as usual, and to wish the host and guests a pleasant day.—On the 19th, he saw all his children, and let them understand how fully aware he was that his death was just at hand. His last distinct and deliberate words appear to



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have been those which he addressed to the Primate at the moment of their final parting:—"Believe me, I am a religious man." He sank during the night, and died soon after two in the morning.

DEATH OF THE KING. Bulletin, June 20th, 1837.

And then took place that immediate opposite action—that sudden revulsion of feeling—which the demise of royalty seems to necessitate, but which can never, under any circumstances, fail to be painful to every reflective person. Three carriages instantly drove up; and into those carriages went the Primate, the Earl of Albemarle, and Sir Henry Halford, the royal physician. It was not five o'clock when they arrived at Kensington palace. The doors were thrown open before them; in the morning sunshine stood the young Queen and her mother, expecting the news, and ready for that day's impressive business—that birth to regality which, like the natural birth, can take place but once.—Having delivered their news, the messengers proceeded to London, to wake up the government and the nation with tidings of the accession of their Queen.

Annual Register, 1837. Chron. 60.

ACCESSION OF QUEEN VICTORIA.

How widely were those tidings to extend! In a few hours they would spread in all directions to the sea: in a few days, the Irish on their wild western coast and the fishermen in the straits of the Orkneys would be wondering how the young girl looked, and what she said when told that she held the highest rank and the largest power on earth. In a few weeks, her subjects in the farthest Canadian provinces of her dominions would be assembling in the clearings of the forest under the summer night, or in the broad moonlight on the prairie, to ask if any one knew how the Queen looked and what she said when told the news. In a few months, turbaned messengers would be posting over the plains of India with the tidings; and in shaded rooms, or under the shelter of tents, people would be speculating in like manner on the first feelings of a young Queen, and soldiers would swear to themselves and to each other to fight and die in her service. Somewhat later, the solitary shepherd on the Australian plains would be musing on the news dropped by a passenger from the coast, and would, if an exile through poverty, or through crime, speculate on whether want or temptation could still oppress men so cruelly, now that a young Queen, with a heart full of mercy, and power in her hands to do what she would, was to rule over a devoted people. It was an occasion which appealed to all hearts:—a time when romantic expectation took possession of many who never knew romance before, and some who had believed that they should never know expectation again. What every one most wanted to learn was whether such exaltation and such hope were in the bosom of the young sovereign herself. Every movement, every tone, was eagerly and lovingly watched, on this extraordinary day of her life, and for some time afterwards: and on this day, her demeanour was all that could be wished.

By nine o'clock Lord Melbourne was at Kensington, was instantly admitted, and stayed half an hour, arranging for the assembling of the Privy Council at eleven. Before noon, came the Lord Mayor, with aldermen and other members of the Corporation, to offer their duty on behalf of the city of London.—Next arrived the King of Hanover—the Ernest, Duke of Cumberland, whose confidential agent had propounded to the loyal Orangemen the scheme of setting aside this young girl from her inheritance because she was a girl and

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Severance of Hanover from England.

young. Lord Lyndhurst lent him his carriage, that no time might be lost; but he left the palace in his own state coach—to start, as soon as possible, for his new kingdom, which had presently cause to mourn his arrival much more than England did his departure. There was no word of regret, even in newspapers, for the loss of a collateral kingdom which had formed a part of the British empire for a century and a quarter: and if this arose in part from the indifference of the nation to the possession of profitless foreign territory, it must be ascribed in part also to the general satisfaction at the departure of the Duke of Cumberland, and at the sceptre having passed down to a new generation, from which more might be hoped than could ever have been derived from that which had given the nation much to bear in many ways since the opening of the century.

Annual Register, 1837, p. 237.

The Council.

Queen's Address.

Annual Register, 1837, Chron. 62.

On the meeting of the Princes, Peers, and other Councillors, they signed the oath of allegiance; and the first name on the list was that of "Ernest," King of Hanover. The Queen caused them all to be sworn in members of her Council, and then addressed them: after which they issued orders for the Proclamation of her Majesty. If the millions who longed to know how the young sovereign looked and felt could have heard her first address, it would have gone far to satisfy them. The address was, of course, prepared for her; but the manner and voice were her own; and they told much. Her manner was composed, modest, and dignified; her voice firm and sweet; her reading, as usual, beautiful. She took the necessary oaths, and received the eager homage of the thronging nobility, without agitation or any kind of awkwardness. Her declaration contained an affectionate reference to the deceased King; an assertion of her attachment to the constitution of the country, and of her intention to rule in accordance with it; a grateful allusion to her mother's educational care of her; an avowal that under circumstances of such eminent responsibility as hers, she relied for support and guidance on Divine Providence; and a pledge that her life should be devoted to the happiness of her people.—The Ministers returned into her hands, and received again, the seals of their respective offices;—the stamps in official use were ordered to be altered; and also the prayers of the Church which related to the royal family: the Proclamation was prepared, and signed by the Privy Councillors; and the Queen appointed the next day, Wednesday, for the ceremony. The first use of the Great Seal under the new reign was to authenticate the official proclamation; which was gazetted the same evening.—During the whole morning, carriages were driving up rapidly, bringing visitors eager to offer their homage. What a day of whirl and fatigue for one in a position so lonely, at such tender years! How welcome must have been the night, and the quiet of her pillow, whatever might be the thoughts that rested upon it! The next morning, she appeared "extremely pale and fatigued:" and no wonder; for she had passed through a day which could never be paralleled.

While the eagerness of homage and duty was thus suddenly gathering about the Kensington Palace, all was very still at Windsor. While the niece was receiving needful and most cordial assurances and offers of duty and support, the uncle was past all such needs. He had received all kind and dutiful offices with gratitude to the last: and now no one could do any thing more for him, or receive his thanks. An attached wife, and daughters who were

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long in recovering from the grief of his loss, were at hand; and every thing else was very still. Perhaps there might be, amidst the grief, a calmer sleep in the twilight of sovereignty here than in the bright dawn of it which was kindling in the other palace. And how different was the review of the life which had gone out from the anticipation of that which was just setting forth on a new career!

WILLIAM IV.

William Henry, the third son of George III., was born in August, 1765, and was therefore in his seventy-second year at the time of his death. He was destined for the sea, and became a midshipman at the age of fourteen. It is amusing to read, at this distance of time, of the distresses of the Admiralty at the insubordination to rules shown by Prince William, when he had risen high enough in the service to have a ship of his own to play his pranks with. When he was two or three and twenty, he twice left a foreign station without leave, thus setting an example which might ruin the discipline of the navy, if left unpunished. But how adequately to punish a Prince of the Blood was the perplexity of the Admiralty. They ordered him to remain in harbour at Plymouth for as long a time as he had absented himself from his proper post, and then to return to his foreign station. This was not enough; but it was thought to be all that could be done in such a case; and the Prince was withdrawn from the active exercise of his profession—from that time ascending through the gradations of naval rank as a mere matter of form. For twenty years, he continued thus to rise in naval rank, besides being made Duke of Clarence, with an allowance from parliament of £12,000 a year. During those twenty years, when he should have been active in his profession, he was living idly on shore, endeavouring after that enjoyment of domestic life for which he was eminently fitted, and from which our princes are so cruelly debarred by the operation of the Royal Marriage Act. The Duke of Clarence was the virtual husband of Mrs. Jordan, the most bewitching of actresses, and the queen of his heart during the best part of his life. They had ten children—five sons and five daughters. It is averred by those who understand the matter well that the conduct of the Duke of Clarence in his unfortunate position was as good as the circumstances permitted:—that he was as faithful and generous to Mrs. Jordan as some parties declared him to be otherwise. When men place themselves in such a position, they are bound to bear all its consequences without complaint; and it is understood that the Duke of Clarence endured much complaint and undeserved imputation with a patience and silence which were truly respectable. His children, the Fitzclarence family, were received in society with a freedom very unusual in England under such circumstances, and certainly, the strict English people appeared to be pleased rather than offended that the affectionate-hearted prince, to whom no real liberty of marriage had been left, should be surrounded in his old age by children who repaid his affection by exemplary duty and care. If this was a spectacle unfit—by the very mixture of goodness in it—for the Court of England, the harm that there was in it was ascribed to the position of royalty rather than the fault of the prince, while all believed that no reparation to the purity of society could be effectually made by depriving the old man of the comfort of his children's society. Some of the family had occasion to find that forbearance could go even further than this; for they were left unhurt,

Penny Cyclop., xxvii. p. 400.

1837. except by universal censure, after their improper and foolish exertion of domestic influences against the Reform Bill and the Grey Administration. The King's relatives were ready to be as good-humoured towards the Fitzclarences as the public were: and one of the early acts of the young Queen was continuing to them the allowance of £500 a year each which had been granted to them by their father. Most people thought there was a wide difference between their accepting this sum from a father who chanced to be the sovereign, and from a sovereign who was under no domestic obligation towards them at all: but the Fitzclarences appeared not to perceive this: and when one of them soon after deliberately destroyed himself, he left a letter to the Queen, requesting that this income might be continued to his children; a request of which it was thought right to take no notice.—After the death of the Princess Charlotte, when many royal marriages took place, in competition for the succession, the Duke of Clarence married the eldest daughter of the Duke of Saxe Meiningen. No issue from this marriage survived, though two infants were born only to die.—For a few months, as we have seen, the Duke of Clarence bore the dignity of Lord High Admiral; and he had previously performed a few holiday services on the sea by escorting and conveying royal visitors and adventurers across the Channel, and up and down in it.—In politics, he had through life shown the same changeableness as in his conduct on the throne. On scarcely any subject was he firm but in his opposition to the abolition of slavery. He had not mind enough to grasp a great principle and hold to it; and, as he had not the obstinacy of his father and elder brothers, he was necessarily infirm of purpose, and as difficult to deal with in state matters as any of his family. What the difficulty amounted to, the history of the Reform movement shows. In other respects, there was no comparison between the comfort of intercourse with him and with the two preceding sovereigns. He had not the stupid self-will and self-sufficiency of George III., nor the vulgar and libertine selfishness of George IV. He was too harebrained to be relied on with regard to particular measures and opinions; but his benevolent concern for his people, his confiding courtesy to the Ministers who were with him (whoever they might be), and his absence of self-regards, except where his timidity came into play, made him truly respectable and dear, in comparison with his predecessors. When his weakness was made conspicuous by incidents of the time, it seemed a pity that he should have been accidentally made a king: but then again some trait of benignity or patience or native humility would change the aspect of the case, and make it a subject of rejoicing that virtues of that class were seen upon the throne, to convince such of the people as might well doubt it that a king may have a heart, and that some of its overflow might be for them.

His Funeral. Annual Register, 1837. Chron. 73.

The funeral took place at night on the 8th of July, the Duke of Sussex being Chief Mourner. For the last time, the Royal Crown of Hanover was placed beside the Imperial Crown on the coffin of a king of England. The wife who had so well performed her duties was present. Queen Adelaide, now Queen Dowager, was in the royal closet. When the coffin had been lowered, dust thrown upon it, the blessing pronounced, and the rocket sent up from the portal which was to cause the lowering of the flag on the Round Tower, the royal widow left the place, and was followed by the mourners, as soon as the style and titles of the new sovereign had been recited. There were no January night fogs here, to peril the lives of the mourners; but instead, a heat so stifling as to make the crowd glad to disperse at the first possible moment.—On the 13th, the Queen, accompanied by her mother, left the old home at Kensington, to take possession of Buckingham Palace. It was the middle of the day; and crowds were waiting to cheer her on her passage to her regal home. She accepted the homage; but she was pale and grave: and there were none of her subjects who would not rather have seen this paleness and gravity than tokens of a gayer mood.

Queen Victoria.

To some, it was not very far to look back to the May in which she was born, and the month—so soon afterwards—when the newspapers told of the Duke of Kent's illness—how he had come in with wet boots, and, "beguiled by the smiles of his infant princess," had played with the baby instead of changing his boots, till it was too late, and he had caught the cold of which he died. The course of years now seemed very short during which they had watched the growth and training of the princess; and here she was—out of her minority the other day, and now sovereign. What they had heard was favourable. If there had been omissions in her education, there had been no misguidance, and no corruption. If the intellect had not been made the most of, the morals were pure, and the habits correct. From an early age, the Princess had been seen walking in all weathers;—sometimes in winter, with thick shoes and a warm cloak on a windy common. She kept early hours, and was active and scrupulously punctual—apologizing for being half a minute late for an appointment, when that extraordinary circumstance happened once in her life. She had her allowance of money from an early age: her way of spending much of it was known at Tunbridge Wells, and other places of summer sojourn; but nobody ever heard of her being sixpence in debt for an hour:—on the contrary, when her childish fancy was taken with some article which she wished to buy for a present to a cousin, she was seen to conclude at once that she must give it up, because she had not money enough till quarter-day to pay for it. And when it was put by for her—to her great satisfaction—it was as early as seven in the morning of quarter-day that she came down, on her donkey, to secure her purchase. These things are no trifles. The energy and conscientiousness brought out by such training are blessings to a whole people; and a multitude of her more elderly subjects, to this day, feel a sort of delighted surprise as every year goes by without any irritation on any hand about regal extravagance—without any whispered stories of loans to the sovereign—without any mournful tales of ruined tradesmen and exasperated creditors. At first, the Queen was very rich;—many persons thought, much too rich, for a maiden Queen, whose calls could as yet be nothing. But in the first year, she paid her father's heavy debts;—debts contracted before she was born. Next, she paid her mother's debts;—debts which she knew to be contracted on her account. We have seen what she did for the family of the late sovereign. Next, she married; and, properly enough, nothing was said about any increase of income. Now, she has a large family of children, and such claims and liabilities as grow up out of twelve years of sovereignty; and still we hear nothing of any royal needs or debts. She lives on her income, and pays as she goes; and perhaps she can never know how much she gains of the respect and affec-

1837. tion of her subjects, by a prudence and conscientiousness so unusual in royalty, but as graceful there as in any other station.

As for the domestic respectability in more important respects which might now be looked for—it was really refreshing to the heart and soul of the nation. A new generation was now on the throne; and there was no scandal as yet, nor any reason to suppose there ever would be any. Here was no corruption bred of the Royal Marriage law—nothing illicit—nothing questionable; but instead, a young girl, reared in health and simplicity, who might be expected to marry soon—making her choice for herself, so that there was every hope that she might love her husband, and be a good and happy wife. Thus far, all was sound and rational; and the event has proved it so. The unsound and irrational part of the popular joy and expectation was that for which she herself was in no way responsible, and for the injustice of which towards herself her most truly loyal subjects were the most grieved. She was taken to be, not only more able and wise than she was, but more wise and able than any person of her years is ever seen to be;—not only more powerful than she was, but more so than any English sovereign, under our present constitution, can ever be; and there was every risk that when disappointment came, as come it must, the innocent sovereign would be punished for the unreasonableness of her adoring subjects. The wise protested against any expectation that a second English queen would have the genius of Elizabeth, without her despotic tendencies; or her royal maternity of feeling towards her people in an age when the function itself is destroyed by the growth of the representative system, and the sovereign is no longer the political ruler of England. The wise might protest; but the people—up to the most enlightened rank of them—expected from Queen Victoria things almost as wonderful as that she should go to the Rock of Cashel, accompanied by the Virgin, St. Francis, Daniel O'Connell, and Lord Normanby, and build up the old Munster Cathedral and the Catholic faith. Now that we had a virtuous sovereign strong in the energies of youth, all was to go well:—the Lords were to work well with the Commons—the people were to be educated—every body was to have employment and food—all reforms were to be carried through—and she herself would never do any thing wrong, or make any mistakes. The few who pointed out that she was human, and royal, and only eighteen;—that it was an infinite blessing that she was pure and conscientious, and eminently truthful and sincere;—that it was enough to expect further that she would be seriously willing to learn, careful in the choice of her advisers, and candid in recognising her own mistakes;—and that it was a cruel injustice to require of her what she could never perform, and then visit the disappointment upon her;—these few were thought cold and grudging in their loyalty, and the gust of national joy swept them out of sight. In truth, they themselves felt the danger of being carried adrift from their justice and prudence when they met their Queen face to face at her proclamation. As she stood at the window of St. James's Palace, on the morning after her accession—at a window where few people knew that she was to appear—her pale face wet with tears, but calm and simply grave—her plain black dress and bands of brown hair giving an air of Quaker-like neatness, which enhanced the gravity—it was scarcely possible not to form wild hopes from such an aspect of sedateness—not to forget that, even if imperfection in

Queen proclaimed.

1837.

the sovereign herself were out of the question, there were limitations in her position which must make her powerless for the redemption of her people, except through a wise choice of advisers, and the incalculable influence of a virtuous example shining abroad from the pinnacle of society. The comfort was at the moment, and has been more eminently so since, that there is a corresponding security in the powerlessness of British sovereigns. Whenever the "War of Opinion," of which the world had been now and then reminded since Canning's time, should overrun Europe, the danger would be for kings who govern as well as reign; or for those who really reign instead of occupying the throne through a political fiction. If such an outbreak should occur in the time of Queen Victoria, she would, if personally blameless, be perfectly secure; secure alike in her political sinecurism and her personal blamelessness. This truth, perceived and expressed at the time, has been confirmed by events sooner than some expected. While revolutions have come like whirlwinds to sweep kings from their continental thrones, our sovereign has sat safe in her island, with not a hair of the royal ermine raised by the blast. If, on the one hand, she has been wholly and necessarily unable to do many things that were expected from her by the unreasonable, who worshipped an idea and not herself, on the other hand, we have her safe, and need fear no harm to the lightest of her royal sensibilities. If it is no longer the privilege it once was to be a sovereign, it is something of a blessing to have some power of kingly beneficence and influence still remaining, without the fearful responsibility for a ruling power which is mainly transferred to the people, and for which they must be responsible to each other.

Continuance of the Melbourne Ministry.

As we have seen, the Queen returned to the late Ministers their seals of office; and it was presently known throughout the country that Lord Melbourne and his coadjutors were to be allowed another trial whether or not they could govern the country.

CHAPTER X.

1837.

Party Discontents.

IN his speech of reprobation against the Ministers, before quoted, Lord Lyndhurst said he saw "but one ray of comfort shining upon" the prospects of the country: he augured much from the character of the new sovereign. His party generally saw something brighter in the future—more rays of comfort than one.

The Melbourne Ministry was reduced to its lowest point of weakness and shame. After the elections of 1831, only six county seats had been held by Tory members, and the Whig government had a majority of 300. That majority had declined to 26; and after the elections on the demise of the Crown it sank again to 12. The Tories thought that a vigorous effort at the beginning of a new reign might give them everything; and they were evidently resolved to spare no exertions to unseat six reformers at least, and thus obtain a majority in the House. The case of the Whigs was desperate; and there is a tone in the political pamphlets of the time which shows this. The people were weary of the eternal disputes and party conflicts about Irish questions and Church questions, while the great interests that were dear to the liberals of England and Scotland stood over for discussion in a future time which seemed further off every session. When a Ministry knows what it is about, and sets well about its work, the Opposition helps to govern the country, and does it almost as effectually, by testing and purifying government measures, as the responsible party itself: but the Melbourne administration was so weak and unskilful as to render the Opposition purely destructive: and this was more than the country would or could bear. No small number of the radical party themselves, and multitudes of the moderates throughout the country, began to declare that they hoped the Tories would get into office, so that the Whigs might recover vigour in Opposition, and that the two reforming parties might once more come into union, and the country be, in one way or another, really governed once more. In such a condition of affairs, it was natural that the Conservatives should suppose themselves about to step into the seats of power. They were already making declarations, or dropping hints of what they should do in such a case:—they should not repeal the Poor Law, nor interfere with any expressed and fulfilled decision of parliament on any subject; but should preserve the Church from further spoliation; and so forth.

The alarm of the Whigs in office and their supporters is very evident now, to the reader of the election speeches and political pamphlets of 1837. The first thing they did was to assume full and exclusive possession of the young Queen's favour, and to use to the utmost the advantage of her name in the elections. There is no doubt that the Queen was ready to bestow her favour at once, on the pleasantest set of gentlemen she had ever known. She had

The Queen's Favour.

seen little society before. Her life was necessarily somewhat monotonous. 1837. Now, she was suddenly introduced into daily official intercourse with half a dozen of the most intelligent and accomplished gentlemen of the aristocracy, who felt a sort of chivalrous interest in her position, who admired her spirit, and were gratified by her confidence, whose instruction and guidance were necessary to her at every turn of her new and important life, and whose wives, sisters, and daughters, were planted about her, to worship while they served her. It is no matter of surprise that she allowed the coterie to take complete possession of her confidence and favour, while she yet needed hourly support and guidance, and knew no one beyond themselves. To the thoughtless, and to those inexperienced in political life, it appeared natural enough that the offices about the Queen's person should be filled by ladies of the Ministers' families: but the Ministers were early warned of the inevitable consequences of such an arrangement; and they should have known them without being warned. If their own position had been less desperate, they might perhaps have paid more attention than they did to the future comfort and dignity of their royal mistress. They were timely warned that the wives, daughters, and sisters, of the present Ministers could not remain about the Queen if the Opposition leaders should come into power; and reminded that it would be hard upon the Queen to be obliged to dismiss her personal attendants on the first occasion of a change of Ministry. This was openly set forth thus early in the Quarterly Review, and in various newspapers; yet Lord Melbourne took no heed to the warning: and he and his coadjutors must bear the reproach of whatever unpopularity the Queen incurred during the first two or three years of her reign, and of the perilous mistake in which she found herself in the spring of 1839. They had their own share of punishment in the disgust excited by their selfish use of the power they so eagerly grasped. There was not a child in England, old enough to look at a newspaper, who did not see the unfairness of exclusively appropriating an inexperienced sovereign as the support of a party in the government which had no other support: and there was not a fine lady, or a footman, or an electioneering partisan, that did not feel the vulgarity of trumpeting the Queen's name on the Whig hustings, and using her favour for the chance of obtaining a majority in parliament, which was otherwise hopeless.—It is easy to enter into the feelings of these Ministers and their families—to conceive of the interest to a sated man like Lord Melbourne of a fresh and singular object of observation and study;—to one who was wont to despise women as he did, to find a young creature, truthful, conscientious, willing and eager to learn, and naturally led to learn of him, as a tutor or a father, as well as her First Minister. We can easily sympathize with the excitement and enjoyment to all the rest of affectionately watching over and serving her who was then, perhaps, the most interesting person in the world. We can conceive of the dismay and heart-sorrow with which they would contemplate such a thing as being severed from her, and yielding up their places to antagonists who were strangers to her, and who would be a complete barrier between them and her. Such feelings were perfectly natural: so natural that everybody knew they must exist, and looked to see how they would be disciplined and controlled by a sense of duty to the sovereign and the country. They were not so disciplined and controlled; and

1837. no one else had it in his power to do the Queen so much harm as she suffered from these devoted servants of hers. Lord Melbourne, always ostentatiously careless about business, was now for many hours daily at the palace. From the public and private talk of the coterie and their adherents, it was understood that the Queen had her partialities among parties at the elections. In a painful and unfortunate mistake made by the young sovereign—a hasty suspicion touching the reputation of Lady Flora Hastings—two of the matron ladies of the household exercised their influence so incautiously, and the Prime Minister supported the consequent proceedings with so little delicacy to a wounded spirit, that public feeling was deeply offended. Their exclusive possession of the palace enabled the impure and disloyal to conceive of scandal, and send forth rumours, which would never have been dreamed of if the royal household had been constituted on the ordinary principle of bringing together persons so impartial in political affairs, or so well balanced against each other, as to be able to retain their places, and give their sovereign the comfort of their customary attendance, through any changes in the Cabinet. It was very well to be prompt in calling the Bradshaws and the Robys to account, from the Home Office and the Horse Guards, for slandering the Queen at public dinners; but members of parliament and officers of the army would never have uttered or listened to such slanderers if the guardianship of the Queen's domestic life had not been appropriated by a coterie.—Yet, with all that their use of the Queen's name at the elections could do, the Whigs found themselves left with a majority of only twelve. A paragraph from a pamphlet of the day shows with what agonizing earnestness they were driven to sue the Radical reformers for aid. "All parties," says the writer, understood to be official, "those for the Ballot, those for Extended Suffrage, those for the abolition of Church Rates, those for grand plans of Public Education, those for the Appropriation Clause, those for Municipal Institutions in Ireland, those for yielding to Canada a more democratic form of government than at present exists there, should one and all enter the new session with this conviction thoroughly impressed upon their minds, that there is not one of these questions, no, not one, which is not secondary to the great object of maintaining Lord Melbourne's Cabinet, as the great agent of future improvement, free from every species of present embarrassment."

'Domestic Prospects of the Country,' &c.

It was impossible to read this without amusement. Even the most devoted adherents of Lord Melbourne could not read gravely such an imitation of his easy assurance. The writer might have been Lord Melbourne himself for the impudence—(there is no other word—) with which he connected ideas of "improvement" and "freedom from embarrassment" with the Melbourne Administration.—The reply of the Radical reformers to this appeal was characteristic. They showed how the existence of the Melbourne Ministry depended on the prosecution of the very questions which it was proposed to put aside for the sake of it. They were willing to uphold the existing Administration with all their forces, if it would mend its ways; and without that, it could not be helped by any body. They pointed out that, throughout the country, the Moderate Whigs, wearied out, were becoming Radicals every day; and intimated that if the government would follow the example of these converts, it might be saved from ruin, but not otherwise. It might become Radical, or yield its place to the Conservatives: the one thing certain was that it could not remain what it was; and that a Tory rule would be better for the country, by rousing its energies, and testing its condition, than a continuance of a Whig government which was merely a name.

RADICAL REFORM PARTY.

From the beginning of the Reform struggle, the number of Radical Reformers in the House had never been less than 70 or 80: and in the last parliament, they had been 150. It was strange that they had not yet been a powerful party; and it would be stranger still if they did not become so now. Now was the time for them to show what they could do, when the Whigs were humbly asking alms of them—petitioning them for ideas, and measures, and the support without which they must sink. These Radical Reform members were men of conscience, of enlightenment, of intellectual ability, and moral earnestness, of good station, and, generally speaking, independent fortune. They were so unlike the vulgar Tory representation of them—so far from being destructives and demagogues—that the sober-minded of the community might more reasonably trust them for the conservation of property than either the Conservatives or the Whigs. Whig government under Lord Melbourne was a lottery: and all propositions of the time for shaving the fundholder, for tampering with the Debt, for perilling the land by a return to poor-law abuses, for interfering with the rights of property in its public investments and private operations, all such destructive schemes proceeded from the rankest Conservatives, and were exhibited in Quarterly Reviews—Tory newspaper articles—Tory speeches on hustings. Not only in this sense were the Radicals no demagogues, and therefore fit to be the guides of the sober middle classes:—they were also no popular orators. They were as far removed from influence over the mob by the philosophical steadiness of their individual aims as from influence over the aristocracy by the philosophical depth and comprehensiveness of their views. They were as far from sharing the passion of the ignorant as the selfish and shallow *nonchalance* of the aristocratic. They perceived principles which the untaught could not be made to see; and they had faith in principles when Lord Grey preached in his place that no one should hold to the impossible: and thus, they were cut off from sympathy and its correlative power above and below. The aristocracy called them Destructives; and the non-electors knew nothing about them. All this should have been another form of appeal to them to make themselves felt in this gloomy time of crisis, when the fortunes of the nation were sinking at home, and storms seemed to be driving up from abroad, and the political virtue of Great Britain was in peril from a selfish powerlessness in high places, and despair in the lowest, and alternate apathy and passion in the regions which lay between. But there were reasons which prevented their making themselves felt.—They were not properly a party, nor ever had been. There was not among them any one man who could merge the differences of the rest, and combine their working power, in deference to his own supremacy: and neither had they the other requisite—experience in party organization. They might try for it: and now they probably would: but it was not a thing to be attained in a day, or in a session. It was never attained at all, during this period of our political history. The chiefs moved and spoke; but they neither regenerated nor superseded the

1837.

Whigs, nor could keep out the Conservatives, when at last public necessity overcame Whig tenacity of office, and the Queen's natural adherence to her first set of Ministers, and brought in a new period marked by a complete dissolution and fresh fusion of parties. There was no other party which, in 1837, was known to include such men as Grote, and Molesworth, and Roebuck—and Colonel Thompson, and Joseph Hume, and William Ewart;—and Charles Buller, and Ward, and Villiers, and Bulwer, and Strutt:—such a phalanx of strength as these men, with their philosophy, their science, their reading, their experience—the acuteness of some, the doggedness of others—the seriousness of most, and the mirth of a few—might have become, if they could have become a phalanx at all. But nothing was more remarkable about these men than their individuality. Colonel Thompson and Mr. Roebuck could never be conceived of as combining with any number of persons, for any object whatever: and they have so much to do, each in his individual function, that it would perhaps be an injury to the public service to withdraw them from that function: and when we look at the names of the rest, reasons seem to rise up why they too could not enter into a party organization. Whether they could or not, they did not, conspicuously and effectively. They were called upon, before the opening of the new parliament, to prove betimes that they were not single-subject men—as reformers are pretty sure to be considered before they are compacted into a party;—but to show that the principles which animated their prosecution of single reforms were applicable to the whole of legislation. If Mr. Hume still took charge of Finance, and Mr. Grote of the Ballot, and Mr. Roebuck of Canada, and Sir W. Molesworth of Colonization, and Mr. Ward of the Appropriation principle, they must show that they were as competent to the enterprises of their friends, and of their enemies, as to their own. Many of them did this: but the association of their names with their particular measures might be too strong. They were never more regarded as a party during the period under our notice: and it may be observed now, though it was not then, that their failing to become a party in such a crisis as the last struggles of the Melbourne Ministry was a prophecy of the disintegration of parties which was at hand, and which is, in its turn, a prophecy of a new age in the political history of England.

London and Westminster Review, xi. p. 25.

What the Whig estimate of "the crisis" was in the autumn of 1837, we have seen. What the Tory view was appears in the insulting speech of Lord Lyndhurst. Here is the declaration of the Radical Reformers: "To the people, at the present moment, we have but one exhortation to give: let them hold themselves in readiness. No one knows what times may be coming: no one knows how soon, or in what cause, his most strenuous exertions may be required. Ireland is already organized. Let England and Scotland be prepared at the first summons to start into Political Unions. Let the House of Commons be inundated with petitions on every subject on which Reformers are able to agree. Let Reformers meet, combine, and, above all, register. The time may be close at hand, when the man who has lost a vote, which he might have given for the Ballot, or for some other question of the first magnitude, will have cause bitterly to repent the negligence and supineness which have deprived him of his part in the struggle. All else may be left till the

London and Westminster Review, xi. p. 26.

hour of need; but to secure a vote is a duty for which there is no postponement. This let the Reformers do; and let them then stand at their arms, and wait their opportunity." 1837.

This was but a lowering dayspring of regality for the young Queen. Her servants were weak, assailed by vehement foes, and pitied by the supporters of whom they implored help. Every body seemed aware that something fearful was impending; and the wise uttered cautions, and sent out admonitions, while the sovereign was launching into the pleasures of freedom and supremacy. As yet, smiles were on her face, and joy was in her movements, whenever she was seen in public; and the most serious and severe of those who watched her hoped that she would not be officiously and too soon alarmed by tidings of the storms that were driving up from afar, and the gloom of distress which was deepening over the people at home.

CHAPTER XI.

1835—38.

Portents in Europe.

As for the state of affairs abroad, on the accession of Victoria to the British throne, it was a subject of anxious contemplation to persons who looked beneath the surface of royal speeches and official summaries, with the prophecy of a War of Opinion in Europe full in their minds. As yet, there was no threat from any quarter of a dissolution of the great Continental Peace; and sovereigns congratulated themselves each on his good understanding with other sovereigns: but there were movements in several countries which showed to the observant that the opposition of the principles of despotism and liberty—of government for the people and government by the people—was working in the heart of society throughout Western Europe, while the process was keenly watched from the great throne of despotism in the East. Of all the countries in which the preparation for a decisive War of Opinion was going on, France was, for various reasons, the most interesting to England.

France.

The obvious domestic politics of France might have appeared dull and tiresome enough to those who did not know what they signified. It is truly wearisome to look over the debates of the French Chambers, and see how the members were perpetually growing vehement about nothing at all; and pertinacious about the wording of a phrase, as if it had been the transfer of a Crown; and obstructive in so many ways that there was no keeping any Ministry in office. We read of new and newly-arranged Cabinets, till it is impossible to remember their succession, or to report the causes of their changes. As our concern with France on this page is only in her relation to England, there is no need to enter into any detail of her official fluctuations; but only to point to the conclusion, from the parliamentary records of France during these years, that they include more than meets the eye. In truth, there was no real parliamentary representation in France; an uneasy consciousness of the fact was growing daily in the general mind; and the King was resolved to repress the conviction, and prevent its being communicated. His whole reign was a concealed conflict with the representative system which he had sworn to maintain. Not only did he choose to rule instead of reigning; he chose to rule alone. His Ministers must be his rivals if they were not his tools: and he "knew how" (using the French phrase) to reduce the representative system to a mere show. While it was thus with him and the nation, much that appeared trifling in the debates of the Chambers might be any thing but trifling—might be symbolical of some great question, or prophetic of some great event. Leaving on one side, therefore, the manœuvres of Cabinets and Chambers, as giving us little knowledge but of that which may be better learned from events, we have only to take a rapid review of the transactions of the King with the French people, or with those of them who were brought into collision with him.

The Representation.

In 1835, a large number of petitions was presented to the Chamber of Deputies, exposing the deterioration of the representative system, and praying for a reform. As has been shown before, a change in the amount of qualification had raised the number of electors from 100,000 or less to 280,000; a number so small, in a population of above 30,000,000, as to make Englishmen wonder how it could afford any pretence of a popular representation at all. Yet it was to complain of the narrowing of even this constituency, that the petitions of 1835 were sent in. The cause of that narrowing was declared to be the law of inheritance, which, by continually lowering the incomes of individuals below the qualification point, had already reduced the constituency to 180,000. Whether the cause was correctly stated or not, the fact was clear. And there were other facts well understood by the constituency, but not of a nature to be petitioned against at the moment;—that by means of the centralizing principle on which French administration proceeds, an amount of official patronage was in the hands of the government, by which it could subordinate the electoral colleges to almost any extent. The result of the present petitioning was satisfactory to the King at the moment; and he seems to have been as unable to look forward as Charles X. himself, and never to have heard or conceived of a possible War of Opinion in Europe. He had in the Chamber, in this very session, 200 members wholly at his disposal as functionaries of his government:—two-thirds of them removable at pleasure; and the other third in a position of expectation of the rewards of obedience. The majority of the Chamber found a pretext, without any difficulty, for ignoring the whole mass of petitions. Some petitioners desired such audacious changes as direct election, or universal suffrage in the primary electors, or abolition of the money qualification, or payment to the deputies: and because of these, the whole question was put aside. The King thought he was governing firmly and wisely. As for what the people thought—they remembered that after five years' rule of the Citizen King, they found their constituency reduced more than a third, and the remainder lying within the royal grasp;—and their thoughts of this Citizen King were none of the kindest.

One victory was gained by the Opposition in the Chamber—much to the chagrin of the government, which was merely punished for driving too far a profitable monopoly of its own. The government succeeded in obtaining a renewal for five years of its tobacco monopoly; but the Chamber decided, by a large majority, that a committee of its members should sit to inquire into the operation of the monopoly. The introduction of parliamentary committees was an annoyance to a government like that of France. M. Salvandy could see no good in it; and he deprecated such an adoption of the barbarisms of the English Constitution.

Annuaire Historique, 1835, pp. 21—33.

FIRST PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE.

One other reference to England at this time is amusing. The financial affairs of France presented a worse aspect every year. Every year there was a new deficit instead of a reparation of the last. Something must be done for the revival of commerce. The Minister of Commerce invited the merchants and manufacturers to enter with him into an inquiry into the principles of free trade, and the operation of the existing restrictions, under which affairs were proceeding so badly. The merchants and manufacturers of France seem to have had at that time as little knowledge and independence as our farmers of

FREE TRADE INQUIRY.

1835—38. the same date. They would not have their system touched. Every corps stood up for the protection of its own article, as a valiant M. P. from the glass districts stood up against Mr. Huskisson in the British House of Commons for the duty on green glass bottles. Whatever, in the changes of human affairs, might occur—whatever that was hurtful or foolish might be swept away—he owed it to his constituents to stand up to the last for the duty on green glass bottles. With equal valour did a corps of twenty-nine eminent manufacturers of plated goods in France contend for the continuance of the existing prohibitory duty on import; declaring, among other reasons, that the English government paid a large bounty on the exportation of plated goods; and that the men of Birmingham could supplant other manufacturers all over the world, because it was common for English lords to be sleeping partners in the Birmingham establishments for the manufacture of plated goods.—It is both melancholy and amusing to look over the records of the proceedings of government and the Chamber about Customs duties during the present and two succeeding years. They wanted to improve the revenue, and yet to keep the old duties;—they were afraid to change their system at all, and yet could not go on with it as it was:—they talked of removing prohibitions, but laid on prohibitory duties, as, for instance, a duty of 70*l.* on a Turkey carpet fifteen feet square—which they called a relaxation from prohibition.—The government found that it would take half the people to control the smuggling propensities of the other half; and it used its power of lessening duties during the weeks or months when the Chambers were not sitting: and sometimes the Chambers were induced to render such relaxations permanent. But no government is a good man of business about commercial matters. When relief was given in one place, it usually happened to be at the expense of hardship in another: and a temporary lowering of duties by royal ordinance affords little inducement to careful merchants to send goods which may not be sold before a recurrence to the old duties takes place.—It did not mend the condition of the people that a tax was laid on sugar of home production, as soon as it was found that the beet-root sugar of France supplied one-third of the national consumption. It was a matter of some deliberation whether to relieve from duty the sugar of the colonies, or to tax that of the home producer. The latter course was resolved on, together with some reduction of the colonial duty; and the condition of the people was not to be improved in this direction. The national poverty, previously great, had been deepening since the revolution of 1830. While he had before his eyes an annual deficiency in the revenue, a spreading poverty among the people, and a narrowing of the constituency by which alone they could speak their grievances, and hope to amend their affairs, the Citizen King thought he was governing firmly and well, and bringing the nation into order. He was hoping to keep the kettle bright and undimmed over the fire by stopping the spout after fastening down the lid.

Annual Register, 1835, p. 393.

Annuaire Hist. 1837, p. 262.

Monster Trial.

The King was bent on bringing to trial some hundreds of his subjects accused of republicanism. The Opposition desired an amnesty, and his Ministers were so opposed to his dangerous and foolish design, that they laid down their offices; and for three weeks France was without a government. The King had his way at last; the Ministers returned under a new head; and the Chamber of Peers was appointed to conduct the "Monster trial," as it was called at the time. They examined the case of 1000 prisoners, and selected 164 for trial. Then followed scandal upon scandal. The Government and the Bar fell out about the defence of the prisoners; and a sort of compromise was entered into at last, for the sake of safety;—a compromise which left both parties discontented.—Then the prisoners would not be defended as proposed—would not acknowledge the jurisdiction of the Court—would not hear the accusation, and, after a time, would not come to the bar—would not leave their beds, would not rise from the floor of their cells, where some chose to lie without any clothing whatever. Never was such a scene witnessed in any Court of Justice as the demeanour of these prisoners—the whole mob of them jumping, waving their hats, screaming, and defying the Court and all its officers.—Then followed the disposal of them in batches, as there was no other way of managing them: and by that method, the grand plea of the prosecution—of conspiracy among the prisoners generally to establish a republic—was in fact surrendered. One of the accused in complaining of the method of trial, called Louis Philippe a tyrant, and threatened him with the tyrant's fate of exile; and for this offence, so excusable, as many thought, under the circumstances, the man, already on trial for a more serious offence, was condemned to a heavy fine, and to an imprisonment of five years, with loss of civil rights for that time.—Of the Lyons batch of fifty-eight, nine were acquitted, and the rest condemned to terms of imprisonment rising from three years to imprisonment for life. As for the Paris batch—they made a hole through the wall of their wine-cellar, and walked out into the garden of a neighbour, and thence, many of them, out of the kingdom. Twenty-eight fugitives from the cellar published a threat that they would come back and compel the Peers to try them when the conditions of a fair trial had been secured for them. Only thirteen were stopped, or afterwards caught. It was naturally said that the escape was probably connived at, to rid the peers and the country of the scandal and perplexity into which the self-will of the King had brought his government.

Annuaire Hist. 1835, pp.180. 231.

Annuaire Hist. 1835, p. 237.

Annuaire Hist. 1833, p. 247.

Plots.

It was now no longer possible for the people to think the government of the Citizen King as good as he thought it himself. If he had been right in supposing that such a method of rule as his was the only one suitable to the French people, they could not be expected to agree with him: and, while the virtuous and sober-minded were grieving over their having been deceived and betrayed—finding themselves now, after five years, without a free press, without popular representation, with an administration of royal tools, with a failing exchequer, and surrounded by a distressed people—it was no wonder that men who were not virtuous, and not sober-minded, should ponder the shortest way of getting rid of such a state of things, and decide upon the murder of the King. There seemed to be no end to the attacks upon his life. Fieschi fired his Infernal Machine, as the royal procession passed, killing and wounding between twenty and thirty persons, but not the King, who was saved by the moment of time required by the assassin for withdrawing the persian window blind from before his gun barrels. Marshal Mortier, late President of the Council, was killed on the spot.—Next, Alibaud made his attempt—coming up to the carriage-door, and resting his weapon on the window while he fired—the wife and sister of the King being in the carriage. This time,

Fieschi. Annuaire Hist. 1835, p. 262.

Alibaud. Annuaire Hist. 1836, p. 220.

Meunier.

Annuaire Hist. 1836, p. 279.

Champion. Annuaire Hist. 1837, p. 95.

Hubert. Annuaire Hist. 1838. Chron. 162.

the King was saved by the act of bowing to some National Guards at the other window.—Next, Meunier made his attempt, shooting at the royal head as the carriage ploughed its way slowly through the snow. The King was untouched; but his eldest son was cut on the ear by the shivered glass. "I know not," said the King, "how I escaped, as, at the moment, I had my head very much advanced towards the door of the carriage. Nemours, who was also leaning forwards, had his head against the glass."—Within two months—in February, 1837, Champion and his accomplices were finishing another Infernal Machine, which they resolved should not fail: but the police found them out, and Champion hung himself in prison.—In the next May there was a review of the National Guards—gloomy enough. Every house that commanded the ground was searched by the police, and the inhabitants examined; all the approaches were blockaded, and the ground well selected.—Before the year was out, Hubert and Steuble were engaged on a third infernal machine—"sixteen gun-barrels, in two rows of eight each"—from which the King could by no means escape. But again the police found it all out. The public were weary of such stories by this time; and it seemed that the King could be taken good care of by the police; so there was an apathy among respectable citizens on this last occasion which somewhat shocked the government, and which was not dispersed even when the traitors became riotous on receiving sentence, and were sustained by the sympathy of the people in court, who hissed, groaned, and cried "murder," till the guards were called in to clear the place.

Strasburg Insurrection.

Annuaire Hist. 1836, p. 244.

A military insurrection was interposed among these attempts at assassination. Napoleon and Josephine planned a marriage between Josephine's daughter Hortense and Napoleon's third brother, Louis, for a time King of Holland: and this marriage was forced on, in defiance of the mutual disinclination of the parties most concerned. The union was a wretched one—the husband and wife rarely meeting, and being quite unable to continue together. The only surviving issue of this marriage at the date before us was Prince Louis Napoleon Bonaparte, then a captain of artillery in the Swiss service. He obtained a footing in the garrison of Strasburg; and on the morning of the 30th of October, 1836, showed himself there, in a dress resembling his uncle's, and proposed to call France to arms, to place him on the throne. Some of the men shouted for Napoleon II.; but presently, while the Prince and some attendants were addressing a few soldiers in a barrack, the gates were shut upon them, and they were arrested. By the end of November, the Prince was half way over the Atlantic, being banished to the United States. His accomplices were actually acquitted, in the face of indisputable evidence of their treason. The crowd, the garrison, and the general population, of Strasburg rejoiced without control, and spent the day as a fête; and the gloom of the Ministers and dismay of the King were in proportion.—The mother of Prince Louis Napoleon died in the next October, her failing health being broken up by anxiety for her only son.

Press Law.

Such events as these, bringing after them evidences of an unpopularity of the sovereign extending far beyond the mad conspirators themselves, seem to have merely exasperated the self-will and folly of the King: and the most conspicuous proof of this, and of his unfitness for the office of Citizen King,

1835—38.

appears in his insufferable repression of the press. Before the end of 1835, he was actually holding the position of Charles X. against the press. The prosecution of journals, and fining and imprisonment of editors, had gone on till some of the liberal newspapers were ruined. The *Tribune* gave up, after having been prosecuted 112 times. But this was found insufficient; and new laws were proposed to protect the prosperity of France—"a prosperity of five years intermingled with danger,"—by shielding "the King of her choice" against attacks. "Order was not yet completely established:" neither a Carlist press nor a republican press could be permitted to exist; and the law proposed for putting them down equals any Carlist despotism which could be conceived of by a Polignac. Fine and imprisonment were to be the consequence of introducing the King, either directly or indirectly, or by any allusion, into any discussion of the acts of the government:—also of expressing any wish, hope, or threat, in relation to either Carlism or Republicanism. The Bill, with a long list of atrocious provisions, was carried by the power of the Crown and its functionaries; the heart-stricken Opposition, who now saw their country and themselves under a precisely similar oppression to that which they had thrown off five years before, giving solemn warning that "laws like the present might afflict, but could not terrify, good men;" and that the matter could not end here.—The condition of the French nation, in regard to its liberties, was even worse than it had been in 1830; for now the blow at freedom of speech was struck not only by King and Ministers, but with the aid of the Chambers. The King had got but too much of the representation into his own grasp; and the state of the nation was so much worse than it had been in 1830, that good men thought it their duty rather to endure than to resist under circumstances so perilous to order and freedom.—The King followed up this law with prosecutions of editors for assertions in their newspapers that the Ministers wished to show that they could now do what the Ministers of Charles X. attempted in 1830: and that the army was not favourable to the Administration, and might be found inclined to a republic, if asked. There was also a creation of thirty new peers, in the King's interest, immediately after the passage of the law which brought offences of the press under the jurisdiction of the Chamber of Peers.—It is merely sickening to go into the details of the press-prosecutions of the period. The government was evidently nervous under the perpetual echoing of its own fears in the popular newspapers—at the Carlist hints and demonstrations which followed on the death of Charles X. in 1836, and the speculations on the disaffection of the army which formed the commentary on the Strasburg affair:—they had gone too far to recede; and now they found the objectionable matter which formed the material of the prosecutions reproduced in Court, under circumstances of emphasis which made it ten times as pernicious as if it had been let alone. There were multitudes who recalled, and repeated to each other, the dying words of Lafayette about their dreadful mistake in regard to their Citizen King: while the few who looked ahead and afar saw how France was daily losing her chance of assuming her proper place in the array of nations, whenever the War of Opinion in Europe should arise.

Annuaire His. 1835, p. 303.

Meantime, the one cheering topic in the King's speeches, in successive years, was his good understanding with England. There had been a narrow

Annual Register, 1837, p. 253.

Relations with England.

1835—38.

With America.

With Switzerland.

Algiers.

escape from a war with America—an escape purchased by a somewhat ignominious concession—by a swallowing of some big, hard words, while paying money due to America which ought to have been paid long before. There was a "momentary misunderstanding with Switzerland," threatening immediate collision—turning upon the question whether an incendiary of the name of Conseil was or was not a spy of the French government. There had been "painful losses in Africa," which had "deeply afflicted" the King's heart. Algiers was a perpetual and a growing trouble, from its expensiveness and unprofitableness; and there were terrible reverses there at this period—the indomitable Abd-el-Kader and the Emperor of Morocco having inflicted rout and disaster which could not be disguised or palliated, even in the King's speech. The fact was, the French held merely their own fortified settlements in that which they called their colony of Algeria. Beyond the defences nothing could be done; for a vigilant enemy, native to the soil, and animated by the fiercest love of country and religion, was always at hand to cut off stragglers, and destroy the processes of industry. From Algeria, nothing was heard of at this time but "painful losses," dismal anticipations, and warnings that the African foe was covertly supported by Turkey. The Princes of the Blood repaired to Africa, to command and fight; large reinforcements of men and money were sent; and there was new food for discontent at home, in the alleged misdirection of the civil and military affairs of Algeria, and that profitless expense of the settlement, which made it "an affliction to France."

Release of State Prisoners.

Annuaire Hist. 1836, p. 237.

Family Endowments.

There was more unpopularity yet to be incurred by the King. He does not appear to have suffered by his clemency to the Ministers of Charles X., whom he released on the death of their master, and permitted to reside on their own estates, on parole, except Polignac, who was exiled for twenty years. His own constituent subjects had perhaps lost much of their indignant feeling towards the Polignacs and Peyronnets, now that a stronger indignation had been incurred by the successor of the old Bourbon King: and the sickly prisoners were allowed quietly to come forth from their captivity, and go home, to live there in obscurity. If the King lost nothing by this, neither did he gain much by an act of amnesty which accompanied it. By royal ordinance, issued in October, 1836, sixty-two political offenders were discharged from further punishment, being merely placed under the surveillance of the police. It was thought that the consequences of political persecution were beginning to be apparent to the King, and that his prudence had taken the alarm: but his warfare with the press did not intermit or slacken, as we have seen.—In his Speech for 1837, he spoke of the Finances as being "in a most prosperous state"—that is, promising a small surplus, in the place of the usual deficit; and he intimated that a great mass of public works would be undertaken, to give employment to the people. There was some surprise at this tone being taken during a period of grievous commercial and agricultural distress; but the surprise ceased when it presently appeared that the King meant to ask the Chambers for money, for family purposes. His children were growing up and marrying; and he now wanted a provision for the Duc de Nemours, his second son, for whom he asked a gift of two estates, and a marriage portion for his eldest daughter, the Queen of the Belgians. The latter was obtained, after much angry debating, and many protests against enriching from the public purse the children of a King who was considered very wealthy in the possession of the property of the Crown, the estates of the House of Orleans, and, in the name of one of his sons, the wealth of the House of Condé. The other demand was withdrawn for the present, with much mortification on the part of the government; but the times were not such as made the people, or the Chambers, willing to endow the Duke de Nemours from the public purse. Another reason was that a fresh call was to be made, on behalf of the eldest son—the Duke of Orleans—who was about to marry the Princess Helena of Mecklenburg Schwerin. The Chamber doubled the Prince's allowance, hitherto £40,000—made a present of £40,000 to the bride for her outfit—and fixed her jointure at £12,000. The marriage took place in May, 1837: and in August of the next year was born the infant who was hailed as the heir of the throne of France. There were many who doubted whether such would ever be his position; for it had long been said by impartial observers that no son of the Citizen King would ever be permitted to succeed him: but there was probably no one who anticipated the full melancholy of that marriage—the domestic uneasiness—the sudden violent death of the Prince in the vigour of his years—and the expulsion of his widow and child from the kingdom, and from all hope of a throne. The superstition which is so easily excited in the French mind had, however, scope on occasion of the marriage—as at the bridal of the Dauphin and Marie Antoinette in the last century, and of Napoleon and Marie Louise—when fearful accidents happened. When the Duke and Duchess of Orleans entered Paris, a few days after their marriage, a sudden panic seized the crowds that were closely packed in the Champ de Mars. In the rush towards the outlets, nearly thirty persons were trampled to death; and many more were injured.—Another child of the Orleans House was married in the autumn of the same year—the beloved Princess Marie—the darling of her parents' hearts—she who sculptured the Joan of Arc which is seen in many a house in England, and is carried on the heads of Italian boys, through all the streets of Europe. This richly-endowed young creature became the bride of Prince Alexander of Wirtemberg; but his happiness was not to last long. He laid his young wife in her grave within fifteen months. Her constitution had been much shaken from her constant alarms for her father's life. She gave birth to a son in the autumn of 1838, became consumptive, and died on the 2nd of January, 1839. The day after her death became known in Paris, the Chamber of Deputies rose, as by an impulse, to go and address the King: and this was the most numerous and the most cordial attendance of deputies that he had ever been greeted with.

Marriage of the Duke of Orleans.
Annuaire Hist. 1837, p. 268.

Of the Princess Marie.
Annuaire Hist. Chron. 233.

Distress.

We find no records of financial prosperity elsewhere than in the King's Speech. Every other register tells of distress, embarrassment, fear, and local tumults. It was observed by the government, and told in the Chamber, that the number of foreign refugees in France was large, and continually on the increase. The Poles were treated with great favour—being admitted free of cost to educational privileges, and trusted with office under government: it was not therefore surprising that there were then nearly 6000 Poles in France. In this fact perhaps lay the most hopeful indication that, in case of a War of Opinion in Europe, France would be found in front of the western combination which must oppose the incursion of despotism from the East. Amidst such

Dissolution of the Chamber.

gloom as has been described—gloom over which the royal weddings of the year shed but a dim and partial light—the Chamber of Deputies was dissolved, and men were left in expectation as to what the Citizen King would do with a new parliament, and whether the parliament would prove itself most worthy of King or people.

Death of Talleyrand.

Annual Register, 1838, p. 402.

A man of an older time—a man of various times, and of a flexibility which adapted him to them all—Prince Talleyrand—was about to close his eyes on this new phase of French destiny. He was 84, and it was time for him to be going. There was no further honour for him in the future : he had had his good things in his life-time : whether they had made him happy or not, he must be satisfied with them now; for there was nothing more for him—not a trace of true honour—not a fragment of esteem—not a movement of affection. He was the marvel of his age for suppleness and prosperity; and he will stand in history as a specimen—dry and curious—but in no way as a vital being, noble, beautiful, or interesting. He knew every body for eighty years—made use of every body—consorted with every body—flattered every body—served any body when there was no politic objection to doing so—and cared for nobody. He preserved to the last his most conspicuous talents, being capable of flattery while almost incapable of speech. On the entrance of the King and his sister, a few hours before the old courtier's death, he exclaimed "This is a great day for our house!" It is possible that, in virtue of his long training in worldliness, he might consider the day as more important to his house from a King's visit than from his own death. However that might be, he died at four, the same afternoon, the 17th of May, 1838. The tidings of his death spread like a whiff of fresh air among those whom he had parched by the atmosphere of his worldliness. Yet the Citizen King is said to have left his chamber in tears.

Spain.

Queen Regent.

Queen Isabella.

In Spain, nothing passed during the period under review that it is either pleasant or profitable to dwell on. The two interests which absorbed the Spanish nation were the Carlist war and the government of the Queen Regent. The Liberal party throughout the West of Europe—both governments and individuals—were pledged to the maintenance of the infant Queen, Isabella II., upon the throne; and therefore, the Queen Regent, her mother, was to govern under a profession of liberalism. It is well known now that she is not a woman who can conceive of the benefits of liberal institutions, or who could be trusted to rule at all. Hard, selfish, intriguing, hopelessly ignorant—she was equally a misfortune, as mother of the little Queen, and Regent of the country. Her daughter received no training which could fit her for her regal function; and the country could learn no other lesson under Christina than to despise its rulers. The young Isabella had but a poor chance at best for health, sense, knowledge, and integrity. As it was, she became a spoiled child of the lowest order—alternately humoured and tyrannized over—flattered and mortified. She appeared before the eyes of her subjects as a sickly, fretful, and wilful child—eternally eating sweet-meats, and concocting caprices, and wholly incapable of intellectual entertainment, or moral devotedness. The public news that reached her was of innumerable insurrections, in half the towns of her kingdom;—street fights, up to her palace doors;—attacks on convents, and the murder of ten monks in one place, and twelve in another—seizure of plate from the altar—delivering up of ringleaders by their comrades

—and the shooting of scores of citizens in a row. Then, there were changes of Ministry for ever—swearings to Constitutions, one after another, each of which was to last for ever;—pledges of reforms, pompously announced, and never carried out;—professions of patriotism and universal benevolence, which were met by imputations of the vilest political profligacy. Amidst the manifold misfortunes of the young Queens of Spain and Portugal, none can be greater than the fearful hollowness by which they have been surrounded since their birth. They had better have been daughters of herdsmen on Etna—out with their distaffs upon the slopes, and feeling the vibration under their feet, and seeing the sulphurous chasms open wherever they tread, and flying from clouds of poisonous ashes—better have lived in honest apprehension like this than have had their ears filled with talk of virtue which, from its staleness, fell dead upon the soul, and have been constantly in the reception of homage so false as to drive them to intrigue or self-will in mere pursuit of a welfare which they could not entrust to any body else. What the young Isabella heard of was valour, devotedness, martyrdom for freedom, sublime disinterestedness:—what she knew to be fact was treachery, cruelty, rapacity, selfish ambition, fickleness, and incapacity. As for the reforms proposed from time to time, and discussed by the Cortes, there was no leisure for their prosecution, amidst the perpetual alarms of war, and occurrence of insurrections; and the state of the finances was too desperate to afford hope of any really good government which did not begin by their rectification.

Carlist War.

As for the other department of Spanish interests—the war between the Queen and her uncle, Don Carlos—it is too disgusting and terrible to be needlessly contemplated. In 1835, the Carlists encouraged the discontents of the most extravagant of the liberal party, in the hope of profiting by the embarrassment of the government: and they succeeded. They obtained many advantages in the north of Spain, where the warfare chiefly lay. The cruelty on both sides became so atrocious, that the Duke of Wellington sent out Lord Eliot, during the short Peel administration of that year, to endeavour to bring the hostile leaders to an agreement to spare the lives of their prisoners. For a short time, this did good: but in the next year, a circumstance happened which seemed to turn the combatants on both sides into devils; and it was from that time impossible for human power to soften the diabolism of the war. The mother of Cabrera, the Carlist leader of the hour, had been accused of some traitorous meddling, and, as the Queen's general declared in his own defence, sentenced to death. But she was a poor old woman of seventy, whose example, or whose life, could be of no public importance. The governor of Tortosa was required by the Queen's officer to deliver her up for execution in retaliation for some slaughterous deeds of her son's. The governor refused: and application was made to General Mina, the Queen's commander-in-chief, who actually enforced the order, and had the poor creature shot in the public square of Tortosa. Cabrera was driven frantic by this act, being "romantically attached" to his mother. He declared that thirty women should suffer a similar fate, as his tribute to his mother's memory. He immediately executed four ladies—wives of officers—whom he had captured—and several more afterwards.—This is enough. We see here all that is necessary to our review of the time, and to our appreciation of the part taken in the war by

Annual Register, 1835, p. 440.

1835—38. Englishmen. It is not pleasant to have to record that Englishmen had any share whatever in a war so barbarous as to shed more or less disgrace on all who voluntarily aided either side; and so ill-conducted as to cast no reflex glory on the act. There is something repugnant to the feelings of Englishmen in our present age and state of advancement, in our countrymen going forth as mercenaries, by their own choice, to fight in a quarrel of succession in any foreign country; and our inclination leads us to be as cursory as possible in our notice of the British Legion which went to Spain under General Evans in 1835.

British Legion.

When the Queen's government became alarmed by the successes of the Carlists in that year, the Cabinet applied for aid to the three Powers in alliance with Spain—Britain, France, and Portugal. Britain declined to send troops, though she would not object to France doing so: and the arms and ammunition already furnished to the amount of £200,000, were considered sufficient. France followed the example of England—promising, however, that the Pyrenean frontier should be watched, that no assistance might reach the Carlists by that way. Portugal was bound by a recent treaty to send 6000 troops when required: but it was found inconvenient and dangerous to do so; and the Queen broke her engagement—breaking up her Cabinet, and one or two succeeding ones, on the occasion. Failing thus far, the Spanish Cabinet next desired of the King of England that he would suspend the Foreign Enlistment Act, that the Spanish government might raise in England a body of 11,000 mercenaries. This was done in June, 1835; and during the summer months, the strange spectacle was seen of recruiting through the towns and villages of Great Britain. It is impossible that the merits of the case could have been understood by all those who enlisted. They went out to war as a trade or an adventure, without even the name of a great popular cause to inscribe upon their banners. We have an account of the affair from a volunteer who owns that he anticipated but little fighting, but hoped that the mere showing themselves would put force into the Queen's troops, and annihilate the Carlists; and then he intended to write a book about Spain, and publish it when he came home at the end of a year. A melancholy picture might be given from his pages of the exasperating and humiliating sufferings undergone by the British Legion in Spain, and the insulting ingratitude with which they were treated: but this is needless, as the whole affair ought to be regarded as a private speculation—no more claiming a place in history than any unfortunate commercial or agricultural adventure, by sea or land. The soldiers of the Legion were starved, frozen, shot, distrusted, deceived, forsaken, and finally, left unpaid. In the midst of all this, an order issued by General Evans cast a fearful light on the nature of the enterprise which he led. He issued a proclamation in June, 1836, declaring that, as the Legion was now in junction with the British Marines, every Englishman found fighting on the side of Don Carlos would be put to death as a traitor to the King of England. A commander of mercenaries could with an ill grace so threaten mercenaries on the other side—be the Royal Marines present or absent. If the Foreign Enlistment Act was suspended, it was unreasonable to quarrel with men for using their freedom of enlistment in aid of any cause which might seem good in their eyes. Either way, it appeared that Englishmen were to slay Englishmen

Order in Council, June 10th, 1835.

Autobiography of a Working Man, p. 429.

Annual Register, 1836, p. 389.

in a cause for which none of them cared. During these years, the Carlists now and then swept through Spain and back again to their mountains, as if to prove that they were not unacceptable to the nation who let them pass, without hindrance and without loss. Now we see them down in the extreme south-west—on the very coast—often hemmed in, but always getting out—and dragging two or three royal armies helplessly after them: and again, at the gates of Madrid—the Queen quaking in her palace, or flying by night. In the year 1838, the Carlists received some checks, in alternation with their victories. Don Carlos married in that year—his sister-in-law, the widow of Don Pedro, having crossed France privately to become his bride, under a dispensation from the Pope. It was hoped that this lady might bring some humanizing influences into his camp, and relieve the horror with which it was regarded by the world. As for the royal cause—the Queen Regent spoke in strong terms of the friendship of the Queen of England, and of hope from various sources: but her voice and manner were faint and faltering, and no one wondered; for the state was bankrupt in fact, while pompous in professions; and the forlorn condition of her little daughter must have struck the Regent more forcibly than ever while she was exhibiting the value of the friendship of the Queen of England.

CARLIST INCURSIONS.

Annual Register, 1838, p. 435.

It seemed somewhat like a mockery of the monarchical system, from one point of view, or an emphatic tribute to it from another, that there should have been at one time three Queens in Europe who came to the throne between the ages of three and eighteen:—a mockery, if the mental and moral qualities of two out of the three were regarded, and a tribute to the power of the theory and ideal when it was seen how all were supported in their kingly seat,—whether in consequence or in spite of their personal qualities. The spoiled child in Spain, and the wilful girl in Portugal, were Queens still, in the midst of state poverty, turbulence, and popular discontents without end—as truly as the intelligent and conscientious Victoria, who had reached womanhood before she became Queen. Isabella was not yet old enough to cause trouble to her ministers by her own qualities; but her neighbour at Lisbon was. The Queen of Portugal was seventeen when she married again in 1835; and she had been for some time out of her minority. She left her ministers no peace. A serious quarrel at this time was about making her new husband Commander-in-Chief. She was resolved that it should be so, and had agreed expressly to the arrangement as a part of the marriage stipulations, though her ministers and parliament were pledged by a late decision, made to meet the case, not to permit any foreigner to hold that most responsible office. Ministry and parliament were broken up in consequence: and in the midst of the confusion, before the new Cortes met, there was a revolution:—the Queen was compelled to accept the Constitution of 1820, and to deprive her husband of his office, because it was incompatible with the working of that Constitution. The assent of the Queen and her friends to the instrument was obtained by mere force—by the military surrounding the palace. From that time incessant fluctuations were taking place—risings, fallings, successes, reverses, of the different political parties in the state, till the mind of the reader becomes confused, and gives up all hope of understanding the politics of Portugal. Two matters, however, stand out clear. An heir to the throne was born in September, 1837,

THREE YOUNG QUEENS.

PORTUGAL.

BIRTH OF HEIR.

Methuen Treaty.

and another son in October, 1838. And the great commercial treaty with Great Britain, the Methuen Treaty, expired, on notice from the Portuguese government. Efforts were made for the renewal of the treaty; but the disturbed state of public affairs prevented any settlement. This might be of less consequence to England than old-fashioned statesmen might easily suppose. Mr. Clay said to an English traveller at Washington, in 1835, "I cannot but wonder at the anxiety of your ministers about the Methuen Treaty, while they think so little of free-trade with growing nations. In Portugal, you never had, and never will have, any thing but two millions of priests and beggars for customers; while here you might have sixteen millions at once—likely to double their number in a quarter of a century." Those who saw the matter from Mr. Clay's point of view cared little for the renewal of any commercial treaty with Portugal, except from a natural tendency to hold to "our old and faithful ally;"—a description which imports more to an English ear than an American can be expected to understand.

English in Portugal.

Annual Register, 1837, p. 324.

Portuguese Indigence.

There were other points only too clear in the condition and temper of Portugal. Our "old and faithful ally" was very unhappy, and therefore very ill-tempered. The English were treated with an insolence and malignity which could not have been endured but through a proud compassion. The British auxiliaries were unpaid; and they received nothing but insult when they applied for their dues. So outrageous was the spirit against the English that their Admiral on the station thought it necessary to issue a general order to his Captains not to visit the palace, or hold any communication with persons in authority, lest the intention of England should be misunderstood. The British were above taking offence—so low was their poor ally sunk: but they endeavoured to avoid all occasion of quarrel. At this time, Portugal was bankrupt, and was in danger of a public announcement of the fact. In the summer of 1838, there was a run on the Banks of Lisbon and Oporto; and the Cortes proposed to declare a national bankruptcy. The Bank of Lisbon and a Mercantile Company offered a loan to avert this catastrophe; and after some hesitation and debate, it was accepted. For some time past, there had been no paper and printing allowed for the Acts of the Cortes, from the positive beggary of the treasury. It was clear that the British auxiliaries need not expect their pay.—It was also very clear that, if a War of Opinion in Europe should arise, the western element of constitutional freedom could hardly be reinforced by either Spain or Portugal.

Central Europe.

As for the central countries of Europe, they yielded ample evidence to those who were on the watch that the storm was daily gathering which must burst before a genuine peace could be relied on for Europe. Those conflicts of opinion were going forward which would lead to war, sooner or later; and in this short period the advance towards a crisis is perceptible enough. The debated questions during the time were religious, political, and commercial—the commercial being of importance, chiefly as being in fact political. Another token of preparation for a future general conflict was that political affinities, and no longer territorial relations, began to determine the classification of European parties. The despots of the East and old-fashioned diplomatists talked of geographical alliances as an ordination of nature—as the safe old principle to which the world would return, as soon as demagogues could be silenced: but not the less did men of a higher sagacity perceive, that all geographical alliances must give way before the force of political affinities—that Poland and Hungary could not be kept down, if they chose to be free, however surrounded by the despotism of the Eastern section of Europe; and that Portugal could not enjoy rational liberty at all the more for her position, unless she became capable of freedom within herself.

Zoll Verein.

This period is remarkable for the formation of the great Commercial League of Germany. The States of Germany had hitherto gone to work, each in its own way, about its Customs Duties—about fixing their amount, and levying them. Each little state had its own complete fence of Custom-houses, and its own scale of duties; and the inconvenience, injury, and ill-humour, caused by such a plan were clear to every body. It was the King of Prussia who exerted himself to substitute a better system; and his ultimate success was an excellent test of the temper and commercial philosophy of Englishmen. Many made an outcry that it was the Emperor of Russia who was really the mover—instigating his Prussian friend to an achievement by which he hoped to humble the manufacturing and commercial consequence of Great Britain: but the true free-traders of England saw the matter in a happier light. They saw that England must make haste to remove what restrictions remained on any branch of her commerce: but, that done, it would be cause of mere rejoicing when restrictions on commerce were done away in any part of the world, since the natural prosperity of any one part is more or less good for every other. Such observers looked on with deep interest, unmixed with fear, while State after State joined the great League—one being at length persuaded to lower its duties, and another to raise them, till the desired equalization was established, and the countries of Germany ceased to be foreign to each other. Baden held out long, on account of her nearness to France: but she joined in 1835. Nassau held out one year longer. The free City of Frankfort was kept back by an existing treaty with England which was incompatible with the new arrangement; but the British government saw how Frankfort would be injured by exclusion from the League, and with her, such British commerce as went forward there; and the treaty was given up. In January, 1836, Frankfort entered the League, and the King of Prussia saw his great work complete—though no one called it faultless. Some of its provisions were seen to be unwise, and others might turn out so in practice: but here was a Commercial Union, extending from the Baltic and the Niemen to the Alps and the Lake of Constance. Old-fashioned politicians regarded with satisfaction what they took for a return to a natural state of territorial sympathy; while men of the new school saw in the arrangement an important aid in the preservation of Peace, in times of political irritation.

Austrian Commercial Treaty.

A commercial treaty between Austria and England was concluded in 1838, by which the Danube was freely opened to British vessels, as far as Galatz, and all British ports, with Malta and Gibraltar, as freely to Austrian vessels. Under the dread of Russia which at this period afflicted a great number of Englishmen to a point beyond all reason and all dignity, this treaty was regarded as a Russian work, as much as the Prussian League: and it was predicted that, by a quiet neglect of shoals and sandbars near the outlets of the Danube, Russia would obtain almost exclusive control over the pulsations of that great artery of the life of despotism.

1835—38.

Russia.

Exaggerated and malignant as were the fears of some of our countrymen about Russia, there were few sensible men who thought them wholly baseless. No one who looked forward to an ultimate War of Opinion in Europe could fail to see that Russia herself occupied nearly one half of the speculation. She might be poor, in proportion to her bulk—ill-compacted, corrupt, slavish, possessed of few of the modern elements of power: but she had the ancient; and they would tell for much in a struggle to establish ancient principles of domination. She was military throughout her whole organization;—as completely formed for foreign invasion as incapable of domestic prosperity and peace. She sits looking abroad over Europe—the representative there of Asiatic despotism; and her character does not change as years pass on. While modification proceeds every where else—while Denmark and Prussia were talking of having parliaments, and Austria was penetrated by new ideas, Russia has remained what she was—possessed of the ancient elements of power, and universally supposed to be inclined to use them for the destruction of the modern, which are in her eyes purely a nuisance. She was not inactive, while thus unchangeable. She has her feelers out in all extremities of the earth and bounds of the sea, and every where she silently plants her force while men are looking another way. Wherever people of any nation go, they find that Russia has been before them. If they go fur-hunting in the northern wilds of America, they come upon a Russian fort. If they wander to an inland sea in Asia, on some commanding promontory they find a Russian fort. Among the swamps of an African delta, or the sands at the mouth of the Red River, they find a Russian fort. If these are not hints of a project of a future universal empire, they are at least a fact which should go for what it is worth, on the face of it. It may be absurd enough to allege—as some wild terrorists have done—that a British statesman has, in our day, been found purchaseable by Russian gold:—it may be fanciful to imagine the voice of Russia to be whispering the terms of every treaty; and the hand of Russia conducting every transaction throughout the length and breadth of Europe; but it would be mere carelessness not to watch her movements, and a treachery to the cause of Freedom to forget that from Russia will proceed, sooner or later, the most perilous attacks she has yet to sustain.

The Emperor at Warsaw.

Annuaire Hist. 1835, p. 455.

Putting aside the surmises of alarmists, we find the Emperor of Russia laying a heavy hand, here and there, on the destinies of nations. In the autumn of 1835, he met the King of Prussia and the Emperor of Austria, in the course of a journey; but whether the despots had any purpose in meeting beyond reviewing their troops, no one knew. On his return, the Emperor of Russia stopped at Warsaw; and the violence of his Imperial wrath there expressed went so much beyond what appeared prudent to every body but himself, that it was widely believed that he was mad. He told the authorities of Warsaw that he was calm, and spoke without rancour; and he assured them that if they cherished any illusion of the nationality of Poland, it should be the worse for them:—if they manifested in any way such an idea, he would level Warsaw with the ground. He desired that what he said might be fixed in their memories; and truly, it was not likely to be forgotten. The Speech found its way into a French newspaper; and thence it spread over the world, greatly reviving popular sympathy with the Polish cause.—This was increased by his audacious act of raising a loan in the name of Poland, which caused the Polish refugees in all countries to warn the world publicly that Poland disclaimed the loan, and considered every man the enemy of that country who contributed by this mode to the increase of its burdens.—As for Turkey, she was wholly in the power of Russia, now that Russia had saved her from Egypt: and she obeyed, when required to promise that no armed vessel should pass from the Mediterranean into the Black Sea, without the express permission of Russia.—In the treaty of Adrianople, Circassia had been made over to Russia: but the Circassians did not acquiesce, and fought a noble battle, from year to year, in resistance to the annexation. The best rulers and soldiers of the East in our time have come from Circassia; and no one wonders at this who watches the conflict between the exasperation of Russia and the patriotism of Circassia. During the period before us, the Russians made little or no progress—the climate and structure of the country being as fatal to them as favourable to the inhabitants. This war brought England into apparent danger of a collision with Russia. An English vessel, the Vixen, landed salt on the coast, at a port which the Circassians had recovered from their foe. A Russian cruizer seized the Vixen on the plea that she had transgressed some Customs regulations, and also that she had landed ammunition for the benefit of the Circassians. The last allegation was positively denied; and, as for the first, it was declared that Russia had no right to impose Customs regulations at that part of the coast. The legality of the seizure was discussed in parliament and the newspapers, till most people were convinced that the affair was a mere plot of a few factious men to embroil the two countries: and the subject was dropped at last, without any distinct claim of release being made by the British government. The tone of Russia towards the people who were successfully resisting her may be judged of by the wording of a letter from the invading general, Williamineff, to the patriot chiefs. Copies were taken; and the letter was read with a painful kind of amusement, throughout Europe:—"Are you not aware that, if the heavens should fall, Russia could prop them with her bayonets? The English may be good mechanics and artisans, but power dwells only with Russia. No country ever waged successful war against her. Russia is the most powerful of all nations. If you desire peace, you must be convinced that there are but two powers in existence—God in heaven, and the Emperor upon earth."—Meantime, the Emperor began to see his way into Persian politics. He was appointed arbiter about a question of succession to the Persian throne: and though the decision was in this case made prematurely by death—the intended heir having died before his father—the idea of Russian intervention was introduced, and thus—as the enemies of Russia did not fail to observe—a step was gained in the advance upon British India.

Passage of the Dardanelles.

Circassia.

Annual Register, 1837, p. 357.

Persia.

No where did the despot's hand press more heavily than upon Cracow. By the Vienna Congress, Cracow, with its small territory, had been declared a free state, under the protection of Russia, Austria, and Prussia, who were bound by the strongest terms to respect its independence, while stipulating that deserters and outlaws from their respective countries should be delivered up on demand of the governments. Some Poles and other refugees had settled in Cracow: some were married, and had lived there for several years. On the Emperor's saint's day, expressions were uttered which, reaching his ear, did not please him. His wrath, into which he drew Austria and Prussia, fell like

Cracow.

Ann. Historique, 1836, p. 317.

a thunderbolt upon the city. A complete clearance of Cracow from all liberal refugees within eight days was ordered; and, cruel as was the order, it was enforced by the troops of the Three Powers taking possession of the city which they had guaranteed from the entrance of any armed force. The scene of the expulsion was dreadful: when it was over, 2000 of the Austrian troops remained; and presently, the exemplary and religious guardians of the liberty of Cracow began to remodel its institutions, according to their own notions. They dismissed the militia; excluded foreigners and foreign publications; established a truly Russian censorship of the press; ordained the support of the Greek church by the state; and dismissed the Diet—postponing indefinitely its next meeting. It is difficult to write these facts without comment: but any comment would weaken their operation. It is difficult to endure the sight—through the eye of the mind—of the anguish and rage of the citizens under this oppression of unsurpassed profligacy—without some endeavour to express their feelings for them: but, in the sobriety of the spirit of history, we must let facts speak for themselves that can speak as these do, and thus appoint Nicholas of Russia his own historian.

Death of the Emperor of Austria.

It was not the Emperor Francis I. of Austria who acted with Nicholas in this matter. The Emperor Francis—the Good, the Paternal, who stroked the heads of children in the streets, and shut up the noblest men of his dominions at Spielburg, and prayed for them while there, and starved them with cold and hunger, and tortured their feelings, and turned their brains, and was so good as to let this be known by permitting Silvio Pellico to tell his story through the press, in order that foolish and troublesome people might be deterred from a rebellion which would cost them so dear;—this "gospel" ruler died in March, 1835, after a reign of forty-three years. It was said that he left his empire as safe and prosperous as he found it. It might be as prosperous; but time alone could show whether it was as safe. Time has shown that it was not so. The astute Metternich remained at the helm of the state: and it was thought that the notorious imbecility of the new Emperor would not matter, while his Minister's ability was available. But Metternich was old, and, though able, he was not wise. The wisdom of despots is never more than a temporary shift: and temporary shifts are of very short date indeed in our age of the world, and in prospect of a War of Opinion in Europe. Before three years were over, we find Metternich threatening war with Switzerland on account of the refugees harboured in her free states, and provoking a religious quarrel which a really wise statesman would have gone a long way round to avoid.—But of that we shall have to speak briefly under our next head. Meantime, it may be recorded, that the helpless Austrian Emperor, Ferdinand I., was crowned at Milan, in September, 1838—the Iron Crown being placed upon his wretched head, on which sat the fate which mocked at the temporary shift. There was an astonishing environment of barbaric splendour—such as might catch the eye of the foolish sovereign, and the foolish among his people, and of the Italians, who were not truly his people: but in the midst sat the fate which decreed that the puppet Emperor should be released from his vain show of sovereignty in a few years, when a sovereignty must be either nothing, or something better than a vain show.—There is nothing more to tell of his or any rule in Italy during this period. It was elsewhere that the patriots of Italy

Coronation of Ferdinand I.

Ann. Hist. 1838, Chron. 229.

were preparing for their part in the European war of opinion: and on her soil there was nothing more remarkable than the ravages of cholera, and the horrors which grew out of the ignorant consternation of the people, who believed that the plague was the work—or rather the malignant sport—of the doctors and their tools among the tradesmen.

Hanover.

The new king, Ernest of Hanover, lost no time in proving himself a true brother of the craft of statesmanship, of which Nicholas of Russia was the present head. He fulfilled all the expectations of Col. Fairman and the Orange peers of England and Scotland. During the reigns of his two brothers, it had become a common story in England how well the Hanoverians had gone on under the Duke of Cambridge and others who presided, and how suddenly every thing was tumult when the Duke of Cumberland arrived. And so it was now. In his pure and pathetic love for his people—of which he spoke with tender earnestness on every occasion of oppression—he set them by the ears together in the shortest possible time. He arrived in his capital on the 28th of June, 1837, and on the 8th of July announced in his Letters Patent his intention of setting aside the constitution of Hanover. He had prorogued the Assembly of Estates—the Hanoverian parliament—immediately on his arrival. In November he dissolved it, and annulled the Constitution, of his own will and pleasure, declaring that it had never been valid.—It was not to be expected that every body would agree in this. Among others, seven professors of the University of Göttingen refused to proceed with the election of a representative, while the Constitution was suspended. All the seven were immediately displaced by the King, and three of them banished. Then followed riots at Göttingen, as might be expected. The students left the lecture-rooms, and escorted their exiled professors over the frontier. The King wanted to make out that the seven recusants were condemned by the other authorities of the University; and immediately six more professors came forward to declare their sympathy with the exiles. The military scoured the streets; but when they had made all quiet for the moment, the business was not over. The smaller states of Germany were alarmed and angry at the King's proceedings. Baden first protested against them, as in violation of the federal league of Germany; and Bavaria and Saxony followed the example of Baden.—The Hanoverians are understood to have agreed to use no violence, and to keep their tempers while guarding their liberties. The King was old, and too bad to mend:—they would keep him in check, and wait for a new reign. So the adverse parties blundered on—the King making no progress with his new constitution, while his people declared the old one to be in force. In June, 1838, the Assembly voted down the new constitution, and the King prorogued the Assembly.—The affair now came before the Germanic Diet at Frankfort, and was discussed, as a matter affecting every one of them, by various states; and Wirtemberg declared that the act of the King of Hanover affected the legal condition of all Germany.—In the next year, King Ernest declared that he had withdrawn his proposed constitution, and that that of 1819 continued in force: but the Chambers voted down the constitution of 1819, and were prorogued for two months. The Germanic Diet, however, voted the validity of that constitution; and thus satisfied all parties as to the soundness of the basis on which affairs rested, while all were deliberating as

Proceedings of the King.

Annual Register, 1837, p. 336.

to what should be done next.—In 1840, the King offered a constitution which contained almost every thing specified by the Chambers. A deputation from the Assembly waited on him to express gratitude and joy; and he declared that their kind words made him feel as if a stone were taken from his heart. He had by this time found that governing people who had their own ideas, as he had his, was a less easy and smooth affair than he and his adherents had imagined when Col. Fairman proposed to include the British Isles under his sovereignty.

New Constitution. Annual Register, 1840, p. 197.

Denmark.

He must have wondered greatly at the King of Denmark for having spontaneously offered to his people something in the shape of a parliament. The Danes had suffered so much, in ancient times, from the oppressions of the aristocracy, that they had, two centuries before, besought their King, Frederick III., to take all power into his own hands; and Denmark had been under despotic government ever since. Now, in 1835, the King had declared his desire to be assisted by the co-operation of his subjects, and enlightened by a knowledge of their wishes. He did not propose to alter the constitution with which the nation appeared to have been satisfied for nearly two centuries; but he proposed to add to it some regulations for the advancement of popular interests. The people were to elect representatives, who should meet at stated periods to discuss affairs, and declare an opinion, for the King's guidance, preparatory to the framing of his decrees. The elections were to be direct; and the electoral terms were liberal. This movement of the King of Denmark may be regarded as one of the most remarkable signs of the times.

Opening of a Representation. Annuaire Hist. 1835, p. 445.

Sweden and Norway.

There was a good deal of disputing, during this period, between the ill-assorted pair—Sweden and Norway. The feudal, aristocratic Sweden was haughty, and treated sturdy, democratic Norway in a way she did not choose to put up with. The dispute was about the Norwegian flag, and the commerce which should be conducted under it—Sweden so acting as to give the world to understand that there was no Norwegian flag and commerce except as included under those of Sweden. In 1838, Norway obtained much of what she desired by a concession of the King's—that her vessels should carry the Norwegian instead of the Union flag, when south of Cape Finisterre, and in other remote parts. The unfortunate prince, through whose conduct and misfortunes Sweden had lost her provinces of Pomerania and Finland, and gained her new constitution and peace with Russia, the deposed Gustavus Adolphus IV., died in Switzerland, in February, 1837. Another of the determined enemies of Napoleon's person and policy was thus withdrawn; and the great soldier's reign seemed thrown back yet further into the past. It was the horror of Gustavus IV. at the murder of the Duke d'Enghien which mainly determined his own fate, and that of the kingdom of Sweden. His latter days were passed in poverty, as well as exile, from his resolute determination to accept of no assistance from any quarter.

Annual Register, 1837, Chron. 176.

Holland and Belgium.

The disputes between Holland and Belgium, sometimes suspended for a term, were renewed with great vehemence, from the King of Holland having cut some wood in the territory of Luxembourg—the possession of which was now the main cause of dispute. In 1832, Belgium agreed to the terms proposed by arbitrators; but Holland stood out. Now, in 1838, Holland was willing to agree; but Belgium refused—declaring that a delay of six years justified a rejection of terms which were agreed to only for the sake of immediate peace. It was evident, however, that Belgium would have to yield: and meantime, it was both amusing and painful to travellers to see how the village tone of spite and rivalry subsisted, unsoftened by time, among the merchants of Rotterdam and Antwerp. In 1835, the Belgian government found itself driven, by popular fears and discontents, to an act of great impolicy, whose utter fruitlessness was presently apparent. The duties on foreign cottons were raised, on the demand of the operatives of Ghent, to a point which encouraged smuggling to a destructive extent. In the next year, an act was passed establishing municipal institutions for all the towns and districts. This was nothing new; such institutions having subsisted before, but, since the separation from Holland, in a state which required regulation. The new Act gave more power to the government in the appointment of officers than it had before; but this loss of some popular rights was felt to be more than compensated for by the provisions for the better ascertainment and working of the rest.

"YOUNG GERMANY."

The remaining class of troubles and prognostics is that in which religious liberties are concerned, either alone or in complication with political questions. The new cluster of associates called, in 1835, "Young Germany" or "Young Literature" was the especial horror of the old-fashioned rulers of Europe. Its members—who were denounced in the established language of reprobation, as deists, atheists, democrats, debauchees—men bent on destroying religion, morality, and society—but who might, if asked, have given a somewhat different account of their views and objects—had withdrawn into France and Belgium, and thence sent forth their writings. All the governments presently agreed to use all the means in their power to prevent the publication and circulation of the works of Young Germany: but, as long experience has proved, it is not in the power of governments to coerce the press effectually; and the proscribed works continued to be written, printed, and read. The next attempt, in 1836, was to prevent the writers passing from one State into another; and the Germanic Diet adopted resolutions for this object which brought them into collision with the legislatures of the respective States, as unwisely as their previous action against the liberty of the press. The Swiss Directory was peremptorily required to deliver up the members of the Young Germany Clubs, or to coerce them: and a disagreement among the Cantons as to how far they would admit these demands of foreign governments was one cause of the trouble and dissensions which agitated Switzerland during this period.

Annuaire Hist. 1836, p. 296.

SWITZERLAND.

The troubles of Switzerland were too many and too intricate to be followed out here. We can do little more than remark that religion was implicated with most of them. One serious quarrel with France was on account of the conduct of the grand council of Basle in breaking through a contract, on the ground of the religion of the purchaser of an estate. A French banker had purchased an estate, and paid for it: but when the Basle authorities heard that he was a Jew, they annulled the contract. France considered this a breach of treaty, and threatened war. Out of this grew more bigotry, and further disputes; and several times it appeared impossible that peace could be preserved. The Catholic and Protestant Cantons were also becoming discontented with each other, and the Protestant and Catholic parties within the particular Cantons.

Annuaire His. 1835, p. 504.

Prince Louis Napoleon.

Annuaire Hist. 1838, p. 292.

When it became clear that something must be done, opinions were taken as to the policy of revising the federal settlement; a measure which was favoured by some and opposed by others. While this was under discussion, Prince Louis Napoleon returned from America, and pursued other objects than attending the death-bed of his mother. With a selfishness as remarkable as his folly, he at once embroiled Switzerland with France. He had obtained citizenship in Thurgau; and the inhabitants were therefore implicated in his quarrel, as they could not admit that a citizen of their State could be ordered away on the command of a foreign government. The Prince allowed the passions of both parties to become exasperated on his account, and even permitted the affair to proceed so far as that the French ambassador was ordered to demand his passports, before he withdrew himself from the hospitality which he was enjoying at the expense of the peace of nations. It remains inexplicable what this Prince imagined he had to give that could compensate to the French people and their neighbours for the mischiefs that he was perpetually devising, and the tumults that he was endeavouring to draw them into.

Zillerthal Protestants.

Annual Register, 1838, p. 469.

The Austrian government in the same year committed a more daring outrage on the rights of conscience than could have been supposed possible in the age in which we live. In the Ziller valley, in the Tyrol, lived some people—under 500 in number—who had become Protestants some dozen years before, and who practised their religion in peace and quiet in their mountain retreat. They were warned by government that they must not stay there, unless they joined the Catholic Church, but they might repair to any Protestant part of the empire. They clung to their mountain home: and a denial of civil rights was next resorted to. They were persecuted with every kind of social vexation that could be inflicted; and forbidden to practise their religion. Their churches were closed, and their every act watched and made painful; till, worn out at length, they prayed for permission to emigrate into Prussia; which was exactly what Metternich wanted. The Prussian government invited them to settle in Silesia; and there they went, the exhausted and indignant victims of a religious persecution which has disgraced our age.

Lutherans of Prussia.

"Persecution of Lutheran Church in Prussia," p. 112.

Mixed Marriages.

The Prussian government was meantime a sinner in the same direction. The King of Prussia actually attempted to bring together the two fiercely opposed parties in Silesia—the Lutherans and the Reformed—by amalgamating their modes of worship. The Lutherans objected, and opposed some of their clergy who would have enforced the union. The government insisted that the union was voluntary: but the people did not find it so in practice. They soon saw their pastors deprived; and they refused to admit successors. Then ensued a struggle for the pulpits, and the calling in of the soldiery to quell disturbance; and all the other painful experience of rulers who try to coerce consciences, ending with an extensive emigration of the Lutherans to Australia and elsewhere. Then, there was the quarrel between the Prussian government and the Catholic Church—the grave dispute whether, under the Concordat of 1821, the Church was or was not independent of the government. The occasions which were sure to arise presented themselves in 1837, and related to Marriages between Catholics and Protestants, and to the doctrines of Professor Hermes. The Catholic clergy were beginning to object to the mixed marriages which they had hitherto sanctioned; and they revived a forgotten decree of the Council of Trent as their authority. The Prussian government obtained from Pope Pius VIII. a dispensation from this decree; but so ambiguously worded as to be of little use. The archbishop of Cologne made use of this to set aside the brief, and required a pledge from the parties married that the children should be brought up in the Catholic faith. The government arrested the archbishop; the existing Pope, Gregory XVI., supported him; the clergy supported the archbishop; and the soldiery fulfilled the commands of the King: and Protestants and Catholics went on intermarrying—some Protestants pledging themselves that the children should be brought up in the Catholic faith, and others relying on the royal promise of protection against the displeasure of Pope and priest.—The other affair was old-fashioned enough; the proscription and persecution of a book and its author. The Archbishop required of the clergy to refuse absolution to all who attended the lectures of Professor Hermes and his followers at the university of Bonn; and the King, who thought this was going too far, required the prelate to abdicate, which he refused to do. He therefore remained a prisoner of state, and the King of Prussia was left in the midst of an open quarrel with the Pope and the clergy.

Annuaire Hist. 1837, p. 401.

In Hesse Cassel there was a religious disturbance too. The multitude were told that the sect of the Pietists were not only opposed to human learning for themselves, but were trying to keep knowledge from the people: and they forthwith broke the windows of the Pietists, and made so much disturbance as to cause the muster of all the forces of the State. It was plain enough that they were in want of more knowledge—whether the Pietists desired or not to keep it from them.

The Pietists. Annual Register, 1835, p. 481.

The Hungarians, whose lot has since become so interesting, were already astir. In 1837, District Diets were meeting, to consult about reforms, among which they demanded of the Austrian government the substitution of the Hungarian for the Latin language, in all public acts; and the removal of the Jesuits from the direction of public instruction. Since that day the Hungarian nation has been industriously preparing itself for that liberty—that independence of Austria—for which it appealed to arms in 1848.

Hungary.

Annuaire Hist. 1837, p. 394.

It appears from this review that the European War of Opinion had already begun in some slight skirmishes, which showed that the forces of the East and the West were mustering on the field, or hastening towards it. The young Queen Victoria and her people might be quiet at home; for no despotism threatened them; and for them, liberty was achieved to that point which rendered certain the attainment of more, as it should be wanted. With them, all was as safe as social affairs can be in an age when they are but imperfectly understood; and if the sovereign and nation looked abroad over the great future battle-field, it was for instruction and from sympathy, and not from any reasons of personal hope or fear.

CHAPTER XII.

1835—40.

Canada.

It is necessary now to review a portion of our history which all parties might be too happy to pass over, if only it were possible. But it is impossible—not only because the stern spirit of History will have every thing told that is known, but because the retribution for the incapacity, the presumption, the disregard of constitutional principle, the ignorance, the passion, the cowardice, which were brought out on the one hand or the other, in relation to the affairs of Canada, is not yet exhausted. That the Whig Ministers and some members of the Opposition of that time never have recovered, and never can recover, from the disgrace of that group of transactions, is merely a minor consequence of what they did. It is a more serious matter that our Colonial relations received a deeper injury than a long course of excellent government could repair. For various reasons, the story must be told as briefly and as nearly without comment as possible.

Lord Durham.

It will be remembered that circumstances arose at the Grey banquet, at Edinburgh, in the autumn of 1834, that gave hope to the weary and disappointed Reform party of a revival of their cause. Lord Brougham there was understood to preach a halting reform doctrine, bringing out Lord Durham to assert a doctrine of unhalting reform, amidst the cheers of the assemblage, and the thanks and sympathy of such official men as were present. It will be remembered that, according to the challenge given by Lord Brougham, the controversy was to be renewed in the House of Lords; and that the prospect of this debate and antagonism was understood to be displeasing, if not alarming, to the King: and the supposition was confirmed by the determined exclusion of Lord Brougham from office—first, by the re-establishment of a Conservative Ministry, and then, on the return of the Whigs, by the putting the Great Seal in commission—while Lord Durham was sent Ambassador to Russia in time to prevent the proposed encounter, and remained there till the spring of 1837.—It will be remembered also with how much difficulty the Radical reform members in the House of Commons continued their support to the Melbourne Ministry, through its never-ending and most humbling displays of incapacity and unfitness for the time. We have seen how, so late as the accession of the Queen, in the summer of 1837—so late as the termination of the elections consequent on that event, in October of the same year—there was every desire to support any administration which made any profession of reform, if only the government would show enough sincerity to preserve its own existence. The difficult and doubtful alliance was preserved chiefly by the knowledge that such a man as Lord Durham was connected with the government—a man who had shown something of what he could do in his construction of the Reform Bill, and whose declaration against allowing an hour to pass over recognised abuses without an endeavour to reform them, was still sounding in the ears of all true reformers. Some additional vigour was given to the hope of the reformers by the treatment of Lord Durham's name both by the Whigs in power and those dismissed from power. The first spoke of him as "imprudent" and "impracticable"; supporting the charge only by anecdotes which told simply of frankness, honesty, earnestness, and a thorough understanding of principles: and the others, Lord Brougham and his adherents, spoke of Lord Durham with a rancour and vehemently affected contempt which betrayed both fear and jealousy. It was reasonably supposed by those who heard this kind of detraction that so perpetual a misconstruction of Lord Durham's words and actions, and so virulent a ridicule of his actual foibles, must proceed from some expectation that Lord Durham was likely to become a man of high importance to that political party which had given up all hope from Lord Brougham. The difficult and doubtful alliance of parties which was, in a manner, preserved over the elections of the autumn of 1837, was, however, dissolved before the expiration of the year. The chief organ of the Radical Reformers declared in January, 1838, "the Ministers are now understood. The alliance between them and the Radicals is broken, never more to be re-united." The reason of this was that the affairs of Canada had come to a crisis; that that all-important colony was now to be lost or won; and that the Ministers were treating the question with an ignorance, and indifference to the rights of the colonists, and to the principles of political liberty, which drove into opposition all who at once cared for political liberties and understood the circumstances of the case.—The case was briefly this.

London and Westminster Review, xii. p. 504.

Annexation of Canada, 1763.

Canada became a British possession in 1763. Its population then was about 70,000. It was governed under old French law, which disappeared in France at the Revolution: and the enjoyment of their customs, as well as their rights, was guaranteed to the people on their becoming British subjects. They fell into some British notions and ways, however, amidst their entire content under British rule; and by 1774 they were ready for a more regular organization of government. This was effected by the Quebec Act of that year, by which a Council was appointed, to assist the Governor, and to have, with him, legislative powers in all matters except taxation. But, ready as the Canadians were to grow into British ways of thinking and acting, the happy process was stopped by the statesmen at home, who thought that by being kept as French as possible, they might be preserved from striving after that independence for which the American colonies south of the St. Lawrence were struggling. By the Quebec Act, the French civil law was re-established, and the English criminal law alone remained. For several years after this, English merchants and others became residents in Quebec and Montreal, and, towards the end of the century, those emigrants obtained—what the French residents had not thought about—a legislature like that at home. There was a House of Representatives, elected by forty-shilling freeholders; and a Council appointed by the Crown, wherein office was held for life, and might be made hereditary, at the pleasure of the Crown. The French inhabitants were alarmed at the idea of the power that would thus be given to the British residents; and they declared themselves perfectly happy under the Quebec Act, and averse to any change. The dangers that they pointed out—dangers

Quebec Act, 1774.

Canadian Legislature, 1791.

to their religion and to the public peace, in case of the British getting the upper hand—appeared so probable, that government decided to divide the province, drawing the line along the boundary of the French settlements. The country to the west was to be purely British, while the French were to keep themselves as unchanged as they pleased. The government had no misgiving about this in 1791, when the thing was done; but Mr. Fox foresaw the mischief that might arise, and gave emphatic warning of it. For many years, his warnings went for nothing, for the colony was contented, and the scheme of division appeared to work well. The French took little interest in politics, and did not even watch over the liberties given them by their own institutions. Both races were extremely loyal, and they fought well for Britain in the second American war.

Operation of the Peace.

It was the era which brought peace to us that introduced the elements of strife into Canada. After the peace of 1815, there was a great emigration into Canada. Many thousands of men disengaged from the war having now to settle down in a home, a considerable number went to Canada; and among these were some who were disappointed at finding a less fair field for exertion than they had expected. In Lower Canada, French laws and customs were in their way; and in the Upper Province, there was a sort of aristocracy of the strong loyalists who hated their neighbours of the United States—having themselves come to Canada, rather than live under the Union. On the other hand, these loyalists were not at all pleased at the competition set up by the new comers; and the French in the Lower Province were alarmed at the arrival of so many British as threatened to swamp their race and interests in no long time. These French formed the first political Opposition ever known in Canada: and in the Upper Province, there was presently an Opposition too; only, it consisted, not of the old residents, but of the new comers.

Rise of Parties.

All this was clearly a simple process of advance from colonial infancy to a less dependent and more stirring condition; and government showed that it thought so by requiring the colony to bear more than hitherto of its expenses. All possible care should have been taken at home to render the long transition which had now begun as easy as it could be made by a spirit of justice and watchful superintending care, while the young colony was trying its powers. Instead of this, and wholly by the fault of the Imperial government, an opposition was now permitted to arise between the Executive and Legislature, such as is considered a fatal circumstance at home when it is the work of a Stuart—a circumstance so fatal as to justify the armed resistance of a Hampden and a Cromwell. As long as it was possible, the Canadian Executive went on in its own way, strengthening its power by enlarging its patronage, and disregarding the fruitless complaints of the Assembly: but when the Assembly proceeded to try whether or not it had any power—whether it was a reality or a mockery—when it began to pass measures to weaken the other branch or to strengthen its own, the government interposed with an act worthy only of the Stuarts. The Legislative Council was composed of tories, who would be sure to contravene the proceedings of the Assembly. From that time, the struggle between the branches of the government in Canada became disgraceful to the mother-country which had permitted it. Each party was as pro-

The Assembly and the Council.

voking as possible to the other: but every one must see that the Assembly was the party most to be considered and pitied. It represented the large majority of the inhabitants of both Provinces, who found themselves not only excluded from office and influence, but unable to get any good measure passed—as every popular measure was, as a matter of course, thrown out by the Council.—Under these circumstances, the Assembly of the Lower Province stopped the supplies for the payment of official salaries in 1833; and the Upper Province followed the example in 1836. The demands which they thus enforced were different in the two Provinces—the Upper requiring that the Executive Council should be made responsible to the Assembly; and the Lower, that the Legislative Council should be made elective. This last demand was in accordance with the opinion of Mr. Fox, given forty years before, in a speech which had prophesied the evils that in fact had arisen: but it was solemnly refused by the Imperial Legislature in the form of an assent, by an overpowering majority, to the Resolutions proposed by Lord John Russell on the 6th of March, 1837. The division took place on the 14th of April, when the Minister was supported by a majority of 269 to 46.

STOPPING THE SUPPLIES, 1833.

CANADA RESOLUTIONS, 1837.

Hansard, xxxvi. 1304.

Hansard, xxxvii. 1290.

The Lower Canadians were only roused by this. They supposed the British government to be ignorant of the state of the case; and this ignorance might be dispelled by a troublesome perseverance in demands. At any rate—whatever had been obtained from the government during a long course of years, had been gained by means of incessant demands, and of dogged refusal of every thing that it was in their power to refuse till their demands were granted. Those rulers have much to answer for who teach any people such a lesson as this: yet, Lord John Russell saw so little into the culpability of the government as to declare, in the speech which alienated his best supporters, that the government of Canada had been one long course of concessions. The government of a growing colony ought always to be a long course of concessions; and if the government be bad, the difference is that the concessions are less advantageous, from being extorted, than they would have been if made for better reasons.

The rage excited in Canada by the news of the decision of the House of Commons was extreme. Threats of armed resistance flew abroad over the country: and with them newspapers filled with seditious articles, expressed with the vehemence common in the political literature of all colonies. Government did not venture to bring the authors to trial—knowing that the juries would acquit. As far as any body knew, nothing was done, from month to month, to redress the grievances complained of by the Assembly; and the people were exasperated beyond control. Two persons arrested for sedition were rescued, on the impulse of the moment, by some armed peasants. The spark was struck among the gunpowder, and the explosion immediately followed. The French population rose as one man, and in December, 1837, the news arrived in London that Canada was in a state of rebellion.

REBELLION.

The government insisted that means of redress had been afforded by the sending out, in 1835, of Lord Gosford, with Commissioners, to inquire into the grievances of the Canadians: but that Commission had made matters worse instead of better, by baulking the hopes of the people—by promising great things, and hinting of liberal instructions which came to nothing but

GOSFORD COMMISSION.

1835—40. causing imputations of deception, if not of treachery, against Lord Glenelg, the Colonial Minister. Lord Gosford now, on the breaking out of the rebellion, came home, resigning the government into the hands of Sir J. Colborne, as a military governor, best suited to the exigency of the time.—Here, then, was the state of things—the Governor and his Council in close union with each other, and in hopeless hostility to the popular branch of the legislature:—the legislature retaliating its wrongs, and seeking redress, by refusing the official salaries, and demanding from the Imperial government a necessary amendment of the Constitution—and the Imperial government refusing the amendment, and merely proposing to improve the quality of the obnoxious Council, without touching its principle. Such was the state of affairs in Lower Canada. In the Upper Province it was much the same; only, instead of a parliamentary refusal of the popular demand, the same end was gained by the putting forth of such government patronage as made the Assembly its own—a temporary and most dangerous device of procrastination. The numbers in the legislature had before been forty reformers and twenty tories: after the elections of June, 1836, when the Governor put forth all his power and patronage, the numbers were forty-one tories to twenty reformers—a change which, occurring in a time of vehement popular discontent, tells its own tale.

London and Westminster Review, viii. 480.

Constitution of Lower Canada Suspended, 1838.

In this state of affairs, what the Ministers did was to propose to Parliament a suspension of the Constitution of Lower Canada. They had suspended the Constitution before, in the preceding April, by taking the disposal of their funds out of the hands of the Assembly. This was all they had done; and now they were for suspending more of the Constitution, when some of the wisest people of every political party in the country considered the cause of the Canadians to be just; their demands such as could not be trifled with; and even the war they were now levying to be defensible as regarded England—though unjustifiable as regarded the neighbours of the insurgents, from its hopelessness and unprepared character. When, in such a state of things, a member of the House of Russell stood forth as a Minister of the Crown to coerce instead of aiding the injured—to call that treason in them which he lauded as patriotism in analogous instances, the thorough Reformers in Parliament and the country felt that it was time to part company with the nominal Reformers who had been practising a Stuart policy, and were now taking a Stuart view of affairs. Upon this occasion it was that the organ of the Reformers declared, "The Ministers are now understood. The alliance between them and the Radicals is broken, never more to be re-united."

As for the revolt—it was put down at once, and with little difficulty. In three weeks, all was quiet. It was not long before the friends of good government, and the advocates of the preservation of our Colonial dominion, began to be glad that the rebellion had happened, as it had certainly roused the government to a sense that something must be done. The tone of Lord John Russell, who led in the Commons, was hard, prejudiced, despotic—full of the arrogance which those are most apt to parade who have brought on a crisis by ignorance or carelessness. He spoke as if the Canadians were purely wilful and ungrateful: and not at all as if they were suffering under protracted misgovernment which they could not get rectified: but he now saw that something must be done. He had suspended a part of their Constitution before,

Hansard, xl. 7-42.

in defiance, and as a punishment; and he suspended the rest now; but it was with a view to something beyond. A full inquiry was to be made into Canadian affairs on the spot, with a view to practical measures. Under the stimulus of rebellion, it was probable that something would be done. Whether something good would be done, must mainly depend on the choice of the man who was sent.

Lord High Commissioner and Governor General.

Hansard, xl. 38.

It was on the 16th of January that Lord John Russell told the House of Commons who it was that was to be sent. "I think it is most important," he said, "that the person to be sent from this country should be one whose conduct and character should be beyond exception—a person conversant not solely with matters of administration, but with the most important affairs which are from time to time brought before the Parliament of this country. I think he should be conversant also with the affairs of the various states of Europe; and moreover, that it should be implied by his nomination that he was not at all adverse to opinions the most liberal, and that he was favourable to popular feelings and popular rights. Having said this much, I know not why I should refrain from adding that her Majesty has been pleased to entrust the conduct of this affair and these high powers to one whom her advisers think in every respect fitted for the charge—namely, the Earl of Durham."—Lord Durham felt "inexpressible reluctance" to the charge. His health was not good; and no post ever filled by any man more absolutely required the unflinching energy and strong capacity for labour which cannot be permanently commanded in a state of uncertain health. With his well-known pride of family and high spirit, there was united a genuine modesty which prevented his ever over-rating his own powers; and a good sense which disclosed to him all the real difficulties of any task which he undertook. It was no wonder therefore that he went reluctantly into a work like this—so critical, so arduous, so incalculably important. The work was nothing less than re-organizing society in Canada, and mainly determining the colonial relations of England for all time to come. His spirit warmed as he dwelt upon the significance of the effort he was now to make; and before he left England he was able to preach a cheerful faith to some who saw but too much to apprehend for him. It is very affecting now to read his appeal to friends and foes, on the announcement to the Lords of his acceptance of the mission;—an appeal which it must be more than affecting to both friends and foes to remember now. "I feel," he said, "that I can accomplish it only by the cordial and energetic support—a support which I am sure I shall obtain—of my noble friends the members of her Majesty's Cabinet, by the co-operation of the Imperial Parliament, and, permit me to say, by the generous forbearance of the noble Lords opposite, to whom I have always been politically opposed." He alluded to the "candour and generosity" of the Duke of Wellington; and on these, he knew he might rely: but, as for "cordial and energetic support" from his friends in the Cabinet, and "generous forbearance" from some who sat opposite—it was more worthy of his confiding temper to depend upon them than consistent with their conduct in political affairs to grant them.

Hansard, xl. 242.

Lord Durham's appointment was twofold. He went out as Governor-General of the five British colonies in North America; and also as Lord High Commissioner, to inquire into, and, if possible, adjust, all questions about civil

1835—40.

His Powers.

government pending in Upper and Lower Canada. His powers were understood to be unlimited; and that of granting a general amnesty, being expressly mentioned by Ministers in parliament, was eagerly discussed in Canada, from the first moment that the news could arrive. By a letter from the Colonial Secretary, dated April 21st, Lord Durham was informed that her Majesty's government were anxious above every thing that the prisoners concerned in the insurrection, who could not be tried in the ordinary courts of law, because it was certain that juries would not convict, should be treated with the utmost possible lenity, compatible with the public safety: and, to secure the immediate settlement of the question which the whole government saw to be "by far the most difficult and dangerous," that of the disposal of the prisoners, the unusual power was given to Lord Durham to bestow absolute pardon, in treason cases as in others, without waiting for the ascertainment of the royal pleasure. When these powers were bestowed, and sympathy and cordial support promised, no doubt the Ministers meant what they said. They were as little able as others to imagine how soon they could be scared into desertion and betrayal of the comrade whom they had entreated to undertake "the most difficult and dangerous" part of their business.

Annual Register, 1838, p. 255.

Preparations.

Before he sailed, Lord Durham had warning how much he had to expect from the "generous forbearance" of political opponents. Owing to some unfortunate delays in the going forth of the expedition, time was given for factious opponents to find means of annoyance. Ridicule was cast on Lord Durham's preparations—even to the packing of his plate, and the number of his grooms; and jocose warning was conveyed to relatives of gentlemen going out, that the ship of war, the Hastings, would be sunk by the weight of the Governor-General's plate; and so much noise did this nonsense make, that the Marquess of Chandos nearly succeeded in throwing over the whole enterprise, by moving an objection to the expense; the Governor-General being himself unsalaried.—A serious mistake, made by Lord Durham and the Ministers, afforded advantage to their enemies, both now and hereafter. Two objectionable persons—convicted of crime, one in a court of justice, and the other at the bar of the Lords, some years before—went out with the expedition; —one with an appointment, and the other without; but with a full understanding that he was to be employed for the purposes of the mission. The Ministers acquiesced in Mr. Turton's appointment, before Lord Durham's departure, though they were afterwards forward in censuring him for it. The appointment was, in truth, a bad one; and no eminence of legal ability should have been allowed to cancel the moral disability.

Hansard, xlii. 422.

Arrival.

The voyage was long; and its leisure was employed by the Governor-General and his official companions in diligent study of Canadian questions, and in discussions on the mass of papers relating to those questions that they had brought from the Colonial Office. The Quebec papers which were sent on board at the mouth of the St. Lawrence contained bad news. There were faction and fury in the towns, and an outcry against any despotic Governor-General: the French population were believed to be planning mischief; and the American "sympathizers" on the borders were giving more and more trouble.—The first step was to prepare a Proclamation, which was done on board. The next was so characteristic as to be worth mentioning.

Executive Council.

It was the custom, on the arrival of a new Governor, to swear in the old Executive Council. Lord Durham did not intend to do this, being aware of the thoroughly party character, and therefore present helplessness, of the late Executive Council: but the thing was very nearly done by an audacious attempt of the Clerk of the Council to surprise Lord Durham into swearing in the old members. To break up the notion that office in the Council was for life, Lord Durham selected a few quiet new members, with whom he joined his three secretaries.

State of the Canadas.

When he landed (on the 29th of May, 1838) the British received him with eagerness, expecting from his hand the annihilation of the French party. The French were dumb and disaffected, sullenly withholding their confidence from their own priests, because the priests were well affected to the government. The late official body was quite odious and helpless. Upper Canada was in a most alarming state. Sir Francis Head, the Governor, and others, had cruelly insulted the Americans; the American "sympathizers" retaliated by attacking steam-boats, and keeping up a small war along the borders, which the government at Washington was wholly unable to control. From the bad state of municipal arrangements, the towns were in a barbarous condition as to police, paving, and lighting: and nothing could be worse than the state of public feeling about the administration of justice, both on a large and a small scale. From radical faults in the method of selling Crown lands, insuperable impediments existed to the proper settling of the country, and the distribution of emigrants westwards; a mischief as fatal to the prosperity of the colony as its political troubles. The canals, indispensable for commerce, which would otherwise find its way through the United States, were left unfinished; and no representations made to government at home about the necessity of completing them obtained any attention. Some of the old tenures of land were vexatious and detrimental, and there was no registration of land. Education was in a backward state; though among the French population, virtuous efforts had been made for the instruction of their children. What the spirit of rancour was between the two races and political parties, there is no need to repeat.

Speedy Improvements.

Such was the state of things when Lord Durham landed at Quebec on the 29th of May. Within a few weeks there was a great change. It used to be said of Lord Durham in his foreign missions, that a week or so was spent first in making potentates understand that he meant exactly what he said, and nothing else; and that from that time, business proceeded rapidly, smoothly, and safely. He used the same frankness now, and so did his coadjutors: and it was understood by every body but the government at home. Colonel Grey went to Washington; and immediately all was well there. All danger of war was presently over; and the British and American forces were co-operating on the frontier. The French population, thus deprived of hope from the Borderers, settled down in a kind of sullen resignation, and left off plotting rebellion. The British were annoyed that the French were kindly treated, and their loyalty became of a soberer kind. In Upper Canada, Lord Durham persuaded Sir George Arthur to give up all his plans of hanging rebels, and to publish a general amnesty, by which minds were set at rest. Before June was out, provision was made for paving and lighting, and furnishing a good police to Quebec and Montreal. By means of a Land Commission, a path was opened to colonists, and the most abundant of all sources of colonial prosperity was freely opened up. A good Court of Appeal was constituted of the Judges, with two additional members. By Imperial Act, the new Executive Council was made the Supreme Appellate tribunal. A Registry of Land-titles was instituted, and a commutation of the feudal tenures of Montreal provided for, as a beginning of a general commutation. An Education Commission saw its way to the establishment of a general system of education by which the adverse races might be united in schools and colleges, so that in another generation their present animosity might have become a tradition.

Scheme of Federal Union of Colonies.

Hansard, xxxvii. 1209.

General Report, pp. 64-5.

These were not small things to have done in the course of a few weeks: but there were two affairs—one more immediately embarrassing, the other more eminently important, than any of these—which still more deeply engaged the minds of the Governor-General and his coadjutors. The permanently important subject was the scheme of constituting a Federal Union of the British North American provinces, for the two objects of securing good government for these colonies themselves, and of providing a counterbalance to the increasing power of the United States in the western hemisphere. This scheme appears to be one of those whose fulfilment is only a question of time. It has been suggested and re-suggested by statesmen, from Mr. Fox downwards—if not from an earlier date still. Mr. Roebuck introduced it, formally and completely, in the House of Commons, in April, 1837; and Sir R. Peel, Lord Howick, Mr. Ellice, and others, declared their approval of it. Lord Durham began immediately to inquire and act—conceiving that no surer means of securing peace in the colonies could be found than uniting their legislation in matters of common interest to them all—such as the conduct of their defence in time of war, post-office and currency matters, and others—while their local affairs were ruled by a legislature in each colony. Sir Charles Grey, who had been one of Lord Gosford's commissioners, had proposed to divide the Canadas into three provinces, with their respective parliaments; by which plan he believed the adverse races would be so separated as to cease to annoy each other, while their representatives might meet in a central parliament, to legislate upon the navigation of the St. Lawrence, their commercial duties, their monetary system, their railroads, canals, and internal communications. Lord Durham was disposed in favour of the large federal system, and of also dividing the Canadas into three provinces—the westernmost of which would be exclusively British; the easternmost French, of a very quiet sort; and the intermediate one containing both populations, but the French in a small minority. The numbers in the two Canadas were at that time 950,000; of which 620,000 were British, and 330,000 were French. By some means or other, the process must be renewed by which the French had been fast becoming British when the Act of 1791 separated the races again: and the present scheme appeared the most promising, by its operation in concentrating powers, and swamping dissensions, while it left laws and customs untouched. Lord Durham requested that the colonies under his government would send able persons to Quebec to discuss this subject with his Council. On the 12th of September, some gentlemen arrived from Nova Scotia and Prince Edward's Island; and others soon followed from New Brunswick.

These gentlemen were well chosen—intelligent, enlightened, and seriously disposed in favour of the scheme. But events were happening which put an end to their deliberations.

DISPOSAL OF THE PRISONERS.

The other affair was that which Lord Durham and the Ministers had agreed beforehand was "by far the most difficult and dangerous"—the disposal of the rebel prisoners. Their fate ought to have been decided by Sir J. Colborne, and not left to be an insuperable embarrassment to the Governor-General. But the thing had not been done; and it must be done now. It was a subject of deep thought and long deliberation. The case was this. The rebellion had been put down long ago; and it was universally understood that its outbreak was by a sort of accident, though its spread was but too well prepared for by the violence of previous agitation. The gaols were full; and the choice of a method of clearing them was rendered infinitely more difficult by delay. To have military tribunals now was out of the question, after such a lapse of time, and in the state of men's minds: and the civil tribunals could not have acted. Convictions could not have been obtained but by a packing of the juries by government;—a course not to be thought of. Two members of the Council suggested to Lord Durham to punish a few leaders lightly, but steadily, by means of an *ex post facto* law, made to meet the case. Lord Durham foresaw the outcry that would be made; and declared that he would not think of it on any grounds less broad than the wish of the leading loyalists, and the petition of the prisoners themselves. The leading men among the British made known their approval; and we have the petition of eight rebel leaders, dated from Montreal Gaol, June 25th, 1838, in which they exhibit their own view of the course which would be best for the peace of the country. "We professed our willingness to plead guilty," they say, "whereby to avoid the necessity of a trial, and to give, as far as is in our power, tranquillity to the country. . . . We again place ourselves at your Lordship's discretion, and pray that the peace of the country may not be endangered by a trial."—Vice-Admiral Sir Charles Paget was at Quebec at the time; and with him the plan was discussed and agreed upon.

Annual Register, 1838, p. 273.

ORDINANCE OF THE 28TH OF JUNE.

Annual Register, 1838, Append. 304.

On the day of the Queen's coronation, the 28th of June, an Ordinance appeared, which declared that the eight rebel leaders in the gaol of Montreal had acknowledged their guilt, and submitted themselves to her Majesty's pleasure: that sixteen others, who were named, had fled: that it was hereby enacted, that the eight before-named culprits should be transported to Bermuda, to undergo there such restraints as should be thought fit: and that any of either class of culprits who should return and be found in the province without permission, should suffer death. It was to be in the power of any Governor to permit any or all of these persons to return. Another clause excepted from mercy persons concerned in two murders connected with the rebellion. With this ordinance was published a proclamation of amnesty for all political offences, for all persons but those designated in the Ordinance.

The success of this measure was complete and immediate. Except that some of the British at Quebec were offended at its leniency, there was nothing but exultation on every hand. It produced a strong impression in the United States; and its instant effect in settling minds, and restoring social confidence in Canada, was very striking. None were better pleased than the prisoners

1835—40.

Approval at Home.

themselves—as might have been expected. Lord Durham had fears throughout that censure would arise at home: but these fears were dissolved as soon as the mails could cross and recross the Atlantic, by the arrival of a despatch from the Colonial Minister, and an autograph letter from the Queen, approving of the ordinance and proclamation in the strongest terms.

Hansard, xliii. 1167.

Attacks by Opposition.

Hansard, xliv. 820.

Hansard, xliv. 1019.

Lord Brougham's Declaratory Bill.

Hansard, xliv. 1073.

The worst seemed now over: the past appeared done with, and the way clear for the completion of the reforms in progress. Lord Durham's health, never good, was somewhat impaired by toil and anxiety; but he was now cheered, and had no doubt of finishing his great work. But the past was not done with; for he had omitted to send home to the government a statement full enough to produce in parliament, to meet the questionings and cavils of the uninformed and hostile. The Ministers knew enough for their own satisfaction: and he relied on their pledges of cordial support, and on their consciousness of his ample powers—given by themselves: but he ought to have furnished them with such complete documentary exhibitions of the case as would have made them as strong with parliament as he believed himself to be with them. He did not; and it was a fatal omission.—Some other matters had not gone smoothly. Lord Melbourne, with all his nonchalance and gaiety, had not spirit, activity, and courage, to stand by an absent friend under attack in the House of Lords;—and especially when the attack came from Lord Brougham, who now had power at any time to unnerve him. All the Ministers were aware of Mr. Turton's intended appointment before he sailed; yet Lord Melbourne gave it up to censure, as if it were a fact new to him, when questioned upon it, on the 2d of July, by Lord Wharncliffe. Lord Durham did not conceal his feelings on this incident, when he next wrote home.—Another attack was made in the Lower House, when Sir Edward Sugden objected to the small number of the Governor-General's Council; and on this occasion, the arrangement was quietly vindicated by Lord John Russell and the Attorney-General.—The great attack was made on the 7th of August, by Lord Brougham, who not only offered objections which every member of the Legislature had a perfect right, and might consider it his duty to offer, but pursued his supposed rival in a manner mournful and surprising even to those who knew his temper, and the antecedent circumstances.—About the illegality of that part of the Ordinance which declared the culprits liable to death punishment if they returned without leave, there was a widely existing doubt—no trial having taken place: but Lord Brougham also denied that the principal of the eight prisoners had ever acknowledged himself guilty; he set forth a different policy for Canada as the one which he avouched to be right; and he brought in a bill to declare the meaning of the Canada Act, under which Lord Durham went out—proposing therein large limitations of the powers of the Governor-General—and offering to indemnify, by act of parliament, all persons concerned in the issue of the Ordinance of the 28th of June. Lord Brougham's own bill contained errors which exposed him to some retort; as when it declared the Ordinance to be "so much for the service of the public, that it ought to be justified by act of parliament," while in the same breath Lord Brougham was vehement about its gross and intolerable injustice. The declaration in the Bill was vindication enough of the Ordinance in a moral point of view, as Lord Glenelg declared; and he avowed his intention of supporting the Ordinance as legal in all its parts but one—meeting the consequences of that one by instructing the Governor of Bermuda not to detain the prisoners if they should choose to depart—which every one knew they would be careful not to attempt. Lord Glenelg also pointed out the novelty, in Lord Brougham's bill, of proposing indemnity for a current transaction;—that is, for acts future as well as finished. All the generous-minded men, of any politics, were of one mind about the temper shown in the treatment of Lord Durham, and the studious forgetfulness of the singular exigency of his position. Such men felt that after having given Lord Durham powers almost unlimited for the management of a crisis almost unequalled, and encouraged him to rely on their "cordial support" or "generous forbearance," as the case might be, it could not be right to pass now—in regard to his very first act of mercy—a bill, called declaratory, but which should materially limit the powers they had so lately conferred. Such men were for rectifying the one supposed illegality of the Ordinance, while supporting its intent, and upholding, wherever it was possible, the authority of the Governor-General, till the organization of Canadian affairs should preclude all doubts as to the field of action for rulers, and release them from the present urgent necessity of support from home. But, if the Ministers fully understood the case, they did not show that they did. They could not, unfortunately, interest parliament by the production of any documentary narrative or reasoning from the Canadian government: and Lord Brougham's opposition was more than they had courage to stand. Though Lord Melbourne declared, on the 9th of August, that the House was suffering from the narrowing of the mind caused by the pursuit of the legal profession, and that if the Canadas were now lost, through the discrediting and fettering of those who should protect them, it would be by special pleading, he gave way in twenty-four hours. The second reading of Lord Brougham's bill was carried by a majority of 54 to 36. After this, all was in confusion. Lord Denman was disposed to believe that Lord Durham had the power of transporting the prisoners to the Bermudas, though every body else had given up that point. It came out that Sir J. Colborne had passed ordinances of attainder more stringent than Lord Durham's, without any question from any quarter: and Lord Brougham now refused to declare whether he thought Sir J. Colborne had transcended his powers. Lord Brougham's bill was stripped of all its declaratory portions, and reduced to a mere enacting of Indemnity, to which again Lord Denman objected, on the part of the prisoners, as a gross violation of the constitution. Amidst this confusion, absurd if it had not been about a matter so serious, the only party whose views and facts were not fully explained was Lord Durham. He and his position were sacrificed, while nothing was established.

Hansard, xliv. 1096.

Ministers succumb.

Hansard, xliv. 1162.

Hansard, xliv. 1138.

Confused Result.

On the 10th of August, Lord Melbourne announced that the Queen's advisers had counselled the disallowance of the Ordinance. "I cannot but say," he declared, "that it is with the deepest regret and alarm that I have taken this course. I cannot but say that it is not without great apprehensions of the consequences that I have taken this course; and it is not without feeling the greatest pain and regret that I have come to the determination."—In the Commons, the debates on the subject were animated, and sometimes angry; and the Ministers appeared even more weak than in the Lords. On

Disallowance of the Ordinance.

Hansard, xliv. 1129.

Hansard, xliv. 1301.

Sir Charles Grey declaring that, while he disapproved of the Ordinance in general, he was convinced of the legality of the provision for the transportation to Bermuda, Dr. Lushington observed that Lord Durham might have gone further astray if he had had more legal advice, since the Lord Chancellor, the Lord Chief Justice, Ex-chancellor Sugden, Sir William Follett, and Sir Charles Grey, all differed from one another as to the legality of his acts. It was now, however, too late to re-consider the matter. The pledge was given to disallow the Ordinance; and it was done in such a hurry that the Amnesty provision was not remembered: and it must now include all the parties named as excepted in the Ordinance. The step which Lord Durham was compelled instantly to take in consequence of this was converted into another charge against him, as will be seen.—As Lord Glenelg had emphatically approved the Ordinance, in a despatch to the Governor-General, it was thought necessary that he should retire when the annulling was decreed. He was got rid of, and was succeeded, as Colonial Secretary, in February, 1839, by Lord Normanby.

Retirement of Lord Glenelg.

Reception of the News in Canada.

It was on a fine September day, on returning from a merry drive, that Lord Durham and his family and advisers received the news of the disallowance of the Ordinance. His friend and best helper, Mr. Charles Buller, knew before dinner—knew by his countenance more than by words—that all was over—that their great enterprise was ruined. When they sat down in consultation, that adviser and friend would fain have persuaded himself and others that all was not over. That this was the result of an intrigue was to them clear. The Ministers and Lord Durham had a deadly enemy, who had given notice of what they might expect when he declared that he "hurled defiance" at Lord Melbourne's head: and Lord Melbourne and his comrades dared not withstand this enemy even while the first lawyers in the empire disagreed as to whether the Ordinance of Lord Durham was legal or illegal. What Sir J. Colborne had done was approved or passed over; and when, in a most critical difficulty which Sir J. Colborne should never have thrown upon him, Lord Durham used powers which Sir J. Colborne had used without question, his watchful enemy seized his opportunity to scare his friends from supporting him, as they were pledged to do. Considering all this, and that Lord Durham was to blame in not having furnished the government at home with sufficient documentary material for his defence, Mr. Charles Buller earnestly desired to hold out, for the high prize of success in retrieving the colony, and forming a new and sound colonial system. But he soon saw that Lord Durham was right in proposing to return. The Governor-General had not health for such a struggle as this must now have been. Energy and decision were not always to be commanded in the degree necessary under such unequalled difficulties; and death in the midst of the work was only too probable. Again—the colony was still in too restive and unsettled a state to be governed by an enfeebled hand; and while unsupported at home, Lord Durham was a less safe ruler than Sir J. Colborne, whom he would leave in his place. Again—it was now clear that the true battle-field on behalf of Canada was in Parliament. With his present knowledge in his head, and his matured schemes in his hand, Lord Durham could do more for Canada in the House of Lords than he could do at Quebec, while the Lords made nightly

Necessity of Resignation.

attacks which drew rebuke even from the Duke of Wellington, and thwarted the policy which they did not understand. Thus, resignation was an act of sad and stern necessity; but, if not so, it was an act of clear fidelity to Canada. It was hastened by rumours of intended insurrection, which, under the circumstances, could be dealt with only by Sir J. Colborne.

THE PRISONERS.

And now again came the question, what was to be done with the prisoners? The case was at present this. They would return on Lord Durham's resignation. Were they to be tried or not? Having been already more or less punished, were they to be punished over again? The violent loyalists would have arrested them; and then would have ensued the very evils, with aggravation, that the Ordinance was designed to obviate. The guilt would have been proved; and acquittal would have followed, in the face of the evidence. There must have been (to avoid such a spectacle as this) a suspension of the Habeas Corpus, or packed juries, or martial law; and if Lord Durham would not introduce such measures for the punishment of the rebels at an earlier date, he would not do it now, to repunish a few of them long after the rebellion had ceased. These men were as yet feeble and insignificant—the few against whom there was a sufficiency of evidence: but they would become abundantly formidable if it could once be said in the United States, and around their own homes, that they were persecuted by the British government. This would be made the pretext of the rebellion then brewing; which might otherwise be easily dealt with from its want of pretext. There was also no time to be lost; for the men might now arrive any day. Lord Durham was therefore advised to meet the difficulty half-way—to speak the first word—and to do it by inserting in his needful Proclamation a declaration that there was now nothing to prevent the return of the prisoners. Lord Durham himself observed that this would be regarded at home as a freak of temper: but his Council encouraged him to brave the imputation, and trust to the facts becoming understood in time.—The act *was* called a freak of temper; and so was his determination to return; and so was his Proclamation—which is considered by impartial observers one of the finest papers of its kind that our history can show. It was not a case in which there could be any concealment or shuffling. To enlist the colonists on the side of obedience and order, it was necessary to tell them simply why he must leave them—why the rebels whom he had punished were released by the home government—and how it was that the plans for the welfare of the colony were suddenly stopped. It was necessary, for the same purpose, to keep up their hope and trust in government—to show them that all might yet be well if he went home to explain their case—to lead them to rely on him still, as resolved in their cause. The Proclamation was issued on the 9th of October; and its immediate effect was to soften the grief and wrath of the colony at losing him—to allay excessive agitation—and to prove that he had not miscalculated the resources of the colony, by bringing forward volunteers, in fresh confidence, for the defence of the province.

PROCLAMATION.

Annual Register, 1838. Appendix, p. 311.

He did what he could to obviate to the colony the mischief done by friends and foes at home; and he did so much that he must ever be regarded as the originator of good government in the Colonies. Rarely has a greater

Report.

work been done in five months than the actual reforms he wrought in Canada: but he did much more by means of the Report which he delivered after his return. By means of this celebrated Report, free and large principles of colonial government are exhibited in action, and endowed with so communicable a character that there are none of our more thriving colonies that do not owe much of their special prosperity to him; and probably few of the least happy that would not have been in a worse condition if he had not gone to Canada. By the utmost diligence in the completion of his measures during the few weeks that remained—by every effort of self-control, and by the quiet operation of his magnanimity—he averted as much as he could of the mischief done at home; but one fatal consequence was beyond his power. His heart was broken. No malice, no indifference, no levity, can get rid of that fact; and it is one which should not be hidden.

Return of the Commission.

He held to his work to the last. On the night before his departure, a Proclamation settled the rights of squatters on Crown Lands. As he went down to the harbour, crowds stretched as far as the eye could see—every head uncovered, and not a sound but of the carriages. This deep silence of sympathy moved him strongly; and he believed that this was his last sight of an assemblage of men; for he had no idea that he could reach England alive. As the frigate—the Inconstant—was slowly towed out of harbour, heavy snow-clouds seemed to sink and settle upon her, while over the water came the sound of the cannon which installed his successor. Those of his Council who remained behind, to clear off arrears of business, were alarmed, during their sad and silent dinner, by a report of fire on board the frigate; and a fire there was; but it was presently extinguished. There was no intermission of storms up to the moment of the landing at Plymouth, on the 1st of December. While the ship was in harbour there, the weather was so boisterous that there was difficulty to the Queen's messengers in finding any seagoers who would

The Landing.

undertake to convey on board the Inconstant the packet of orders to land Lord Durham without the honours. It was done by a boat being allowed to drive so that the packet could be thrown on board. He met honours in abundance, however, on his landing, and all the way to London—crowded public

Reception.

meetings—addresses—escorts—every token of confidence and attachment that could cheer his heart. There was great joy throughout the liberal party when

Spectator, 1838, p. 1159.

his first words at the Devonport meeting were known. They referred to his "declarations to the people of Scotland in 1834," as his present creed. But he disappointed the liberals by his magnanimous determination to devote himself to the retrieval of Canada, and to listen to nothing else till that was effected.

Lady Durham immediately on her return resigned her situation in the Queen's household. Great efforts were made to bring about a reconciliation between Lord Durham and the Whig government; and his generosity aided the attempt. He could afford to do it; for he had never spoken evil of his enemies. Nothing had throughout been more touching to those who knew him than his slowness to give up hope in Lord Brougham, and his quickness in seizing on favourable explanations of doubtful conduct. He now required of his friends silence in both Houses about his quarrel: and he kept silence himself.* While the newspapers of all parties were commenting on the weakness of the Whigs, and declaring that they could not remain in power "beyond Easter at furthest"—(a curious hit as to date)—Lord Durham devoted himself only the more to the support of a ministry which, with all its sins and weaknesses, professed a liberal policy. He was soon joined by his coadjutors from Canada; and they worked together at the celebrated Report. There was more cavil about small circumstances on the publication of the Report—worthy of mention only as showing how he was betrayed when he relied on the "cordial support" of friends and the "generous forbearance" of opponents. Much of his time and labour was devoted to the instruction of his successor, Mr. C. Poulett Thomson—afterwards Lord Sydenham — who wisely resolved to adopt the Durham policy with the utmost completeness. Many hours every day were spent in consultation, and preparation of measures; and to good purpose. Not only were Lord Durham's plans all adopted by Lord Sydenham, but his own best measures were planned in Lord Durham's house in London, prepared for introduction in Canada, and the agents informed and instructed. These duties done, but few months of life remained to the baffled Statesman. When he could give information about Canadian matters, or vindicate the principles of good government at home, or in the colonies, he was at his post in the House of Lords. But he was visibly sinking. In the summer of 1840, he was ordered to the south of Europe for his health; but he found himself so ill at Dover that he turned aside to Cowes, where he became too weak to leave his couch. Even then, and when he was unable to take any nourishment but a little fruit, there was so much life and animation in his countenance and conversation, that those who knew him best could not but believe that much work yet lay between him and the grave; but on the 28th of July he sank rapidly, and died in a few hours. He left his large estates and other property as much as possible at the disposal of his devoted wife—the eldest daughter of Earl Grey: but she followed him in a few months, leaving their young son to emulate the virtues of his parents as well as he might after the spectacle of their example was withdrawn.

LORD DURHAM'S DECLINE.

HIS DEATH. Annual Register, 1840. Chron. 173.

HIS CHARACTER.

Thus were the liberal party in Great Britain deprived of the statesman whom they had hoped to make their head. It may be questioned whether his health or his temperament would have ever permitted him to hold a post in the Cabinet for any length of time. He could not under Lord Grey's premiership; but the short-comings of that administration are quite enough to account for his secession. The halting reformers were no comrades for him: and his directness, frankness, faith, and courage, were altogether overpowering to them. Magnanimous as his nature was, he had faults of temper which excused some dislike and some ridicule, though that fault was much exaggerated by those who, being able to establish no other charge against him, made the most of that. He had much to bear from the loss of children, and his infirm health; but he never was wanting to the discharge of public duty.

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* It will be evident to the readers of this chapter that it is written from private knowledge, as well as from public documents. After the above notice of Lord Durham's generous silence, it is hardly necessary to say that no statement of the circumstances of his Canada mission was ever made to me by himself or any of his family.

1835—40. From the moment when the young John George Lambton fixed the attention of the best Opposition men by his maiden speech, to that in which he provided for the establishment of responsible government in Canada, he was the trust and hope of the most highly-principled liberals in the country. He had good working ability—a clear head, an unprejudiced mind, a ceaseless desire to learn of all who had any thing to tell, and a most conscientious industry. It has been said that he had a genius for truth; and so he had—both for the perception and the expression of it. He thought nothing of his own power of public speaking; but some of the best lawyers and literary people in England liked it as well as any election mob that he ever addressed. He died at the age of forty-eight, and left no political successor. If the advent of the Conservatives was before believed to be near, it became pretty certain from the time of Lord Durham's death. There was no longer any thing in connexion with the Whig administration worth contending for. Lord Durham had upheld it, and thereby enjoined the same conduct on his friends: but when he was gone, no further effort was possible; and the Melbourne ministry remained dependent on the mere favour of the Queen.

Mr. Charles Buller.

It has been mentioned that Mr. Charles Buller was the nearest friend and adviser of Lord Durham in his Canadian enterprise. He was his chief secretary, and a member of his Council; and it is understood that the merit of the celebrated Report is mainly ascribable to him. He was before a remarkable member of the House of Commons—remarkable for high political promise, and for a manly amiability which engaged the friendly regard of every man within the four walls. He was one of the leaders of the Radical Reform party; but this did not render him an object of suspicion or dislike to the rankest Tory in the House—any more than his overflowing wit made him feared or avoided. He was but thirty-two when he finished his work at the Canadian Report; and every one hoped and supposed that a long course of usefulness and honour lay before him. But in ten years, he also was gone, after having risen much in the appreciation of those who knew him most and least. In the words of one who knew and has described him well, "To a singular extent it can be said of him that he was a spontaneous, clear man. Very gentle, too, though full of fire; simple, brave, graceful. What he did and what he said came from him as light from a luminous body; and had thus always in it a high and rare merit, which any of the more discerning could appreciate fully. To many, for a long while, Mr. Buller passed merely for a man of wit; and certainly his beautiful natural gaiety of character, which by no means meant levity, was commonly thought to mean it, and did, for many years, hinder the recognition of his higher intrinsic qualities. Slowly it began to be discovered that, under all this many-coloured radiancy and corruscation, there burned a most steady light; a sound penetrating intellect, full of adroit resources, and loyal by nature itself to all that was methodic, manful, true; in brief, a mildly resolute, chivalrous, and gallant character; capable of doing much serious service."

Carlyle, in London Examiner.

When these men and their coadjutors were turned back from their "serious service" in Canada, the work did not stop. Their successors—Lord Sydenham and his coadjutors—applied themselves with diligence and devotedness to carry out their policy and their projects. Lord Sydenham's health was no

Lord Sydenham.

better than his predecessor's; and he died within two years of his arrival in Canada: but in that brief time, and under that disability, he had done more than most men would in many years.

Mr. C. Poulett Thomson, as he still was, went out with the leading points of his mission well fixed in his mind—that the minority was no longer to govern—that the Executive and the Assembly were to be brought into harmony, in accordance with what are considered the first principles of government at home, and with what was called responsible government in Canada:—and that such improvements as he contemplated must be made, not by means of organic changes in the Constitution, but by administering the powers of the government in a just and liberal spirit, so as to attract the sympathies of all to the Executive. He wished to do in Canada what Lord Normanby and his coadjutors had attempted in Ireland; and it remained to be seen how much resemblance there was between the "Family Compact" in Canada and the "Protestants" in Ireland—between the "French" in Canada and the Catholics in Ireland. By his earliest declarations after his arrival in different colonies, it was seen that he held two points of doctrine in regard to his own conduct:—that as the representative of the sovereign, he was responsible to the Imperial authorities alone: and that his first obligation was so to form and conduct his government as to ensure its harmony with the majority of the House of Assembly. The question was whether the doctrine was practicable. The proof must be the work of many years, and must include the trial of many governors. In his own short day, he did what he could.—He had the inestimable advantage which was denied to his predecessor in the most critical moment of his probation—support from the government at home. The new Colonial Secretary, Lord J. Russell, was a sort of idol of his, and afforded him a full requital of support. He had no personal enemy in the House of Lords to scare his friends into desertion. He had every advantage; and he used his advantages well.

Responsible Government.

Life of Lord Sydenham, p. 273.

His chief aim was the legislative re-union of the two provinces, in order to undo, if possible, some of the mischief of their division, and promote the process of Anglicizing the French. This project he announced in his speech to the Legislature, at the end of 1839; and he witnessed the accomplishment of it in little more than a year. The legislative union of the two Canadas was proclaimed on the 10th of February, 1841—the Queen's first wedding-day, and the anniversary also of the conclusion of the treaty of 1763, which made Canada a British colony;—and also of an act which it was less conciliatory to remember—the royal assent to the suspension of the Constitution of Lower Canada.—It needs not be said that the Union was unacceptable to the French population. They struggled hard to return representatives who were opposed to the project; and there are still many, on both sides the water, who doubt whether the matter is settled yet. The elections were conducted with much riot and some loss of life; and the first proceedings of the United Legislature were stormy; but, on the whole, matters went better than the Governor expected; and in a private letter of the 27th of June, a fortnight after the opening, he declared himself at ease in regard

Union of the Canadas.

Life of Lord Sydenham, p. 210.

Life of Lord Sydenham, p. 211.

to the great experiment. So sanguine was he, that he concluded his letter with the following prophecy in regard to a supposed successor: "Such a man—*not* a soldier, but a statesman — will find no difficulties in his path that he cannot easily surmount; for every thing will be in grooves, running of itself, and only requiring general direction." If this was too much to anticipate, it is certain that the improvements achieved in two years were very remarkable. Men's minds were calmed; credit was re-established; public works were in rapid progress; and confidence in the Imperial rule, and hope from the colonial government, had, in a great degree, superseded hatred and fear.

Death of Lord Sydenham.

Lord Sydenham's health was too much shaken by disease to permit him to sustain any shock of accident; and he died, in September, 1841, from the consequences of his horse falling with him—by which his leg was broken. He gave his attention to public affairs to the last, with great calmness and fortitude. His age was only forty-two.

His Character.

The first association with the name of Mr. C. Poulett Thomson always was, and is still, of a repeal of the Corn laws. He was the son of a merchant; and no man in England—not Mr. Huskisson himself—ever had a more thorough understanding of the soundness of the principle of Free Trade. It was to advocate this principle—and especially in regard to Corn—that Mr. Thomson was returned by Manchester as her representative. For a time, he did the duty well: and when he became a member of the Whig administration he stipulated for freedom to advocate a repeal of the Corn laws. But this soon grew a cold and formal affair: and we know by an extract from his private journal, written on his voyage to Canada, that he was conscious of having lost ground with the Liberal party, and as a speaker—in Manchester, and the House of Commons: "Manchester and the House of Commons are no longer what they were to me." His office of Chancellor of the Exchequer was so disagreeable to him, that he would give up the Cabinet and parliament to avoid it. He was glad to get away to Canada, and do there, by himself, the work that was pressing to be done. He and the political world seem to have been, at that time, in a state of mutual disappointment; and the reason appears to have been that he was not in himself lofty enough for the position assigned him. He was an able man—had a clear head, and a strong will, and much knowledge: but there was little morally noble in him but his strength of will —shown in his industry and his endurance of pain. He did many useful things at the Board of Trade; and he found his most favourable position when he went to Canada: but he neither entertained nor inspired political faith, nor drew towards himself any high respect or genial admiration. Though his last scene of action was his greatest and best, he was regarded, and is still, as one of the Whig failures;— one of the ministers of a critical period, who, while possessed of considerable talents and some good political qualities, have done more than many worse men to shake a nation's faith—if not in the principles of politics, at least in those who are the most forward in the profession of them. The professions of Whig reformers while rehearsing the death-knell of abuses, have but too often reminded us of Dr. Johnson's knocking and summoning ghost—the conclusion in both cases being that—"nothing ensued."

1835—40.

What is due to Mr. C. Poulett Thomson's memory is, that he should be regarded and remembered as Lord Sydenham, who governed Canada for two years on the introduction of Lord Durham: and that, if too much self-regard mingled (as his journal shows) with his inducements to the work, he still bore in mind Lord Spencer's more generous suggestion, that Canada offered "the finest field of exertion for any one, as affording the greatest power of doing the greatest good to one's fellow-creatures."

Life of Lord Sydenham, p. 97.

CHAPTER XIII.

1839.

Jamaica.

CANADA was not the only British colony which caused embarrassment to the Ministry by hostility between the Legislature and the Executive. The affairs of the nation were brought to a crisis in the spring of 1839, by the doubt whether or not the Constitution of Jamaica should be suspended.

It was then, and it will ever be, a matter of grateful surprise that such an event as the abolition of slavery should have taken place amidst such quietness as prevailed throughout the West Indies. The quietness continued in most of the settlements; and no reasonable person can read the records of the time without emotions of admiration at the temper of the negroes during the critical years which succeeded their emancipation. While their conduct was such as to need no excuse, that of their former masters ought to have every allowance. It is impossible for men (with a few exceptions) who have lived all their lives in the possession of power like that of the slave-owner, to enter at once into a state of fellow-citizenship with their former slaves, and to stand equal with them before the law, with a good grace. The Jamaica planters were now to decree in their Assembly, and to live under, a whole set of new laws which had never been necessary when all other men in their island had been their property and not their neighbours; and it was most difficult for them and the imperial government to agree upon those laws.—Again, many practices towards their negroes, while still in a state of apprenticeship, which appeared to them necessary and ordinary, could not be allowed under the new system; and the whipping of women, the cruel use of the treadmill, and many penal usages in prisons, were forbidden by imperial law, which appeared in the eyes of the planters mere favouritism to the negroes and vexatious interference with themselves. Again; they had been reared in a temper of chartered self-will; and they could not in a moment be expected to feel and show the deference, moderation, and good manners, usual among residents under a better social system than theirs. Their conduct was exactly what might have been expected—that of children in a combative mood. The members of Assembly talked big, did provoking things, snubbed successive governors, used insolent language to the Imperial government, endeavoured to trench upon the Abolition Act by provisions in Bills of their own, drew upon themselves disallowance of their Acts from home, and then refused to provide for the executive wants of the island, and even hustled, and turned out of their house, the officer who came to deliver the Governor's message. After the completion of emancipation, a large proportion of the planters oppressed the patient negroes by arbitrary and illegal exactions of rent, by a misapplication of the Vagrant law, and by all those harassing methods which suggest themselves to persons accustomed to despotism as a natural right, and thrown into ill-humour by a deprivation of that power. That such was the conduct of that

The Planters.

section of society represented by the Assembly is established by a mass of documentary evidence, and by the testimony of all who went fresh to the scene—such as the Stipendiary Magistrates, the Bishop of Jamaica, and observers from various countries travelling in the island. 1839.

IMPERIAL AGENTS.

On the other hand, the Governors and other agents of the Imperial government could not be expected to preserve an immoveable patience—to resist all provocation to antagonism—to see without some emotions of partiality the oppression of the negroes who were free by law but not yet in fact—to hear with perfect composure the scolding which they incurred by encouraging the negro women to decline hard field-work, and by putting the labourers in possession of their own case with regard to wages. It might have been impossible for the officials to avoid collision with the planters; but there were faults on their side as well as on the other—as is always the case where quarrels exist. In 1836, Lord Sligo, the Governor, violated the privileges of the Assembly by sending down a message that he would not pass a Bill unless it were amended as the other House proposed. For this he was rebuked by the Home Government; and it was necessary for him to apologize to the Assembly. He did this on the 24th of May; but could not, after such a misadventure, remain in his post with any satisfaction; and he was succeeded, in the next autumn, by Sir Lionel Smith.

1836. LORD SLIGO.

1837. SIR LIONEL SMITH.

Sir Lionel Smith was popular at first; and during 1837, affairs proceeded with great smoothness. But the new Governor was soon pronounced guilty of favouritism to the negroes, like every body else who came from the mother country; and the insolence of the Assembly became more ostentatious than ever. It was prorogued and then dissolved, under a stubborn refusal on its own part to pass the laws necessary for the transaction of the affairs of the Colony. The new Assembly paraded a similar refusal, as soon as it met—in December, 1838. The especial cause of wrath at this time was the passage of a Bill in the Imperial parliament for the regulation of Prisons in Jamaica; an Act rendered highly necessary by the cruelties which were perpetrated there, under various licenses and pretences which must be put an end to. Another method by which the Planters evinced their wrath was by forcible ejectments of the negroes from their habitations, by which distress and serious discontent were occasioned. The Governor reported to the authorities at home that the laws were not clear in regard to the relations between the employing and the labouring classes; and that a complete new system was required. Under these circumstances—with local legislation at a stand, and a large section of law requiring absolute renovation—Lord Melbourne's government determined to propose to parliament a suspension of the constitution of Jamaica for five years, during which a provisional government would administer its affairs, allowing time for an improvement in the temper of all the parties who were in a state of wrath.

1838.

PROPOSED SUSPENSION OF THE CONSTITUTION.

The government miscalculated their strength. It must be a strong government which can carry a suspension of a constitution of 200 years old under any circumstances but those of an armed rebellion, like that of Canada; and Lord Melbourne's government had for some time been the weakest of the weak. It had lost the support of the Radical reform party, and was universally understood to be kept in power by the mere favour of the young Queen:

1839.

Unpopularity of Lord Melbourne.

and there were circumstances in the demeanour of the Premier which made that favour more conspicuous than it ought to have been. By this time, it had become the custom of newspapers of various politics to record the visits of Lord Melbourne to the palace, and his attendance on the Queen in her drives and at her frequent parties. All reasonable persons saw how natural it was that a sovereign so young and inexperienced in her difficult duties should desire the daily attendance of a minister so qualified by years and abilities to be her instructor and guide; and how natural it was that a man of so much worldly experience and so kind a heart should be interested in the task of instruction and guidance. But even the most sensible and genial-minded saw how it was also reasonable that the public in general should be discontented at an appearance of pleasure-seeking and idleness in the first minister of an empire, whose work must be such as ought to leave him little leisure for absence from his office during any but the evening hours which are all that busy men usually spare for relaxation. It was in the midst of a prevalent desire for a Prime Minister who should appear sensible of the responsibility of his position, that the Cabinet brought forward a measure which at least was very daring, and on which the most conscientious politicians might naturally entertain the gravest doubts.

1839.

Hansard, xlvi. 1243.

Debate.

When Mr. Labouchere brought forward the motion on the 9th of April, 1839, it appeared that, though no one defended the conduct of the Jamaica Assembly, men of all parties saw one way or another by which the dire necessity of suspending the Constitution might be avoided. Some were for treating the Assembly as passionate children, to whom a time for thought and a place for repentance should be permitted. Some hoped that the cure might be naturally effected by means of the enlargement of the constituency of Jamaica, which must take place henceforth through the admission of black citizens to political rights. And there were many who objected to the assignment in the preamble of the Bill of insufficient grounds, while the real and avowed reason was that the present was a good occasion for that renovation of the institutions of Jamaica which was a necessary consequence, sooner or later, of the great social changes introduced by the emancipation of the negroes. The affair was fully debated. Counsel were heard on behalf of the Assembly; and most able and pertinacious was the pleading. The Ministers strained every nerve to carry their measure; but when the decisive division took place, on the 6th of May, or rather on the morning of the 7th, their majority, in a full house, was only 5.

Hansard, xlvii. 967.

Resignation of Ministers.

On the reassembling of the Houses, the Ministers announced their resignation of office. The reason assigned was, that the Assembly of Jamaica would believe that its insolence was countenanced by the British parliament, and the authority of the Crown would be so much weakened in that and in other colonies, that Lord Melbourne's administration could not undertake to govern them. This avowal placed the Melbourne Cabinet in a difficulty on its speedy return to office; but yet it was a fortunate avowal on the whole; for it saved the Ministers from the very serious imputations which they deserved to incur, on its now appearing that they had brought their young and confiding sovereign, through her very confidence in them, into a position of great perplexity and humiliation. The time had now come for the fulfilment of the predictions of

Bedchamber Question.

those who had given early warning about the formation of the Queen's household. The Whig Ministers, by surrounding the Queen with their wives, sisters, and daughters, exposed her to be stripped of her accustomed attendants on a change of ministry, or forced her into an unconstitutional position. They now gave her unconstitutional advice, and upheld her in an unconstitutional position. She was gently dealt with by public opinion in this matter, on account of her youth and inexperience; and also because she was really the chief sufferer on the occasion: but the universal conviction was, that the Ministers had been no true friends to their trusting sovereign. Their enemies concluded, wrongly but not unnaturally, that the whole affair was deliberately planned to give the Whigs a continued hold on office. It was as confuting this charge that Lord John Russell's avowal of inability to govern the colonies, after the late division, was useful to the reputation of the Melbourne Ministry.

Hansard, xlvii. 973, 976.

Sir R. Peel sent for.

It was on the Tuesday night that the resignations were announced. On Wednesday, the 8th of May, at two o'clock, Sir R. Peel waited on the Queen, in answer to her summons. The Queen had sent for the Duke of Wellington in the first instance; and the Duke had told her that the chief difficulties of a Conservative Ministry would lie in the House of Commons; and he therefore advised her to send for Sir R. Peel. The remarkable truthfulness of the Queen's character showed itself at once; a truthfulness which may occasionally annoy or discourage persons who had been accustomed to something different at Court, but which is an inestimable security to her Ministers by making always firm the ground under their feet. After the intrigue and untruthfulness of George IV., and the vacillating weakness and senile impressibility of William IV., which made their Ministers feel the precariousness of the arrangements of every day, there was something so delightful to the Queen's first set of Ministers in her steady attachment and perfect ingenuousness, that no one can wonder if their discretion, and even their sense of political honour were laid asleep. Exactly in the same proportion must the same qualities in the sovereign have been embarrassing to her new Ministers on their first approach. As Sir R. Peel avowed to the House, the Queen greeted him with a spontaneous intimation that she was much grieved to part with her late Ministers, whose conduct she entirely approved. This was an awkward beginning: but the negotiation proceeded; and no difficulty arose as to the formation of the new Cabinet. Nothing had thus far been said about the constitution of the Household: and so little was Sir R. Peel prepared with any complaint or any plan about this, that, as he said, he did not know of what individuals the Household was composed, till, having to talk over the matter with his intended colleagues, he referred to the Red Book, and was struck with the completeness of the arrangements for surrounding the Queen with the nearest relations of the Whig Ministers. For instance—an instance adduced by Sir R. Peel in the House—the great difficulty of his government was Ireland—the Conservatives being in direct opposition to the policy of Lords Normanby and Morpeth; and, on referring to the Red Book, he found that the two ladies in the closest attendance upon the Queen were the wife of Lord Normanby and the sister of Lord Morpeth. Sir R. Peel told his intended colleagues what he meant to do. He should not propose any change in the offices below that

Hansard, xlvii 984.

Household Appointments.

1839. of Lady of the Bedchamber. He trusted that the ladies who held the higher offices would voluntarily resign. If they did not, he must propose a change. This was not only reasonable, as requiring the most ordinary and indispensable token of the confidence of the sovereign, but it was a constitutional right. The highest authorities on constitutional points declared that the appointments of the Household are State appointments, for which the Minister is responsible. Neither the Queen nor her Ministers, however, knew this. Hitherto, there had been sufficient consideration for the dignity and the feelings of the sovereign to keep the constitutional question out of sight. Now that the Melbourne Ministry had rashly brought it forward, it was found that Sir R. Peel was right. Though constitutionally right, it was, however, said at the time that he was politicly wrong; and that he might have known that the ladies in question would certainly resign immediately, and their places be quietly filled up in a prudent manner with persons in a neutral position as to their political connexions. That Sir R. Peel retired upon this difficulty was regarded as a sign that he was not ready for office; that not only was Ireland his "difficulty," as he said, but that it was so great a difficulty as to indispose him for office. If the Whigs now came in again, they would hold rule at his will and pleasure; and he could take their places at any time when they had fairly tried, and proved to the world, the issue of their Irish policy. However this might be, what took place about the Household appointments was made known to all the world—the Queen having given permission to Sir R. Peel to tell his part of the story in Parliament. The explanations of the Whig Ministers, and the records of the daily news of the time, supply the rest.

When Sir R. Peel told the Queen, on the Thursday, what he proposed to do, she misunderstood him, as was afterwards acknowledged, and supposed him to contemplate the removal of all her servants and household friends. This was certainly the impression she had given to the late Ministers when they agreed in Council on the mistaken advice which they gave the Queen. The Queen stopped Sir R. Peel in his statement of his wish to consult her predilections, by declaring that she would admit no change whatever in the female appointments of her Household. She sent for Lord J. Russell, and expressly put the question to him whether she was not right in this. He replied that she was right: and she then naturally requested him to support her now, as she had before supported her Ministers. She also appealed to Lord Melbourne, and stated her intentions to the Duke of Wellington. The Duke was of opinion that Sir R. Peel must retire if the Queen's mind was thus made up. Lord Melbourne called his colleagues together, and in Council they advised the Queen to send the following note to Sir R. Peel: "The Queen, having considered the proposal made to her yesterday by Sir R. Peel, to remove the ladies of her bedchamber, cannot consent to adopt a course which she conceives to be contrary to usage, and which is repugnant to her feelings." Thus, the Whig Ministers formally assumed the responsibility of this act. No allusion is made to the constitutional principle of the case: and Lord John Russell's appeal throughout was to "usage." It is strange that he and his colleagues did not see how contrary to usage it was to place the sovereign in the position into which they had brought their Queen.

In two or three hours Sir R. Peel sent a letter to the Queen, in which he

Hansard, xlvii. 1010.

Hansard, xlvii. 985.

Hansard, xlvii. 1001.

Hansard, xlvii. 985.

Hansard, xlvii. 985.

carefully related the facts of the case—an act of justice to himself under the circumstances. He had been misapprehended in the highest quarter at first; and already reports were flying abroad through Whig households of his having desired to separate the Queen from all the friends of her childhood, and to impose upon her an unacceptable set of servants of Tory politics, and so forth. The Queen gave him permission to read her note and his own letter in parliament, and to set himself right, as far as these went. He was so misrepresented, however, by some close connexions of the Whig Ministers—(among others by the Hon. Wm. Cowper, the nephew and private secretary of Lord Melbourne, in an address to the Hertford Electors, for which he afterwards publicly apologized)—that the popularity of the Queen and her Whig Ministers suddenly rose for a short time, at the expense of the reputation of the Duke of Wellington and Sir R. Peel for loyalty and good manners; and the Melbourne Ministry were thus enabled to return to office with more apparent probability of being able to govern the country than had lately been seen. But mistakes, fostered and spread by party spirit, are not of long duration: and in a few weeks, the noisiest and busiest of agitators and journalists on the side of the Whigs were glad to drop all mention of the Bedchamber question. By that time, her Majesty's advisers had admitted that "her Majesty's position was untenable."

Withdrawal of Sir R. Peel.

Annual Register, 1839, p. 130.

How far their own restored position was tenable was now the question. What was to be done about Jamaica, which they could govern only by a suspension of the Constitution, which parliament would not effectually support? Lord J. Russell had also declared in resigning, that there were other serious affairs which the Melbourne Ministry could not conduct without more of the confidence of parliament than they possessed. Sir R. Peel's statement of what his difficulties would have been afford some insight into those of the restored Whigs:—"The state of India—the state of Jamaica—the state of Canada—would all require my immediate consideration; and with respect to some of them, the proposal of legislative measures. I considered the internal state of this country—I saw insurrection in the provinces—I saw the letter of the noble lord opposite (Lord J. Russell) inviting the respectable part of the population of this country to form themselves into armed societies for resisting outrage. . . . . . Let me take that particular question on which my chief difficulty would arise. Who can conceal from himself that my difficulties were not Canada; that my difficulties were not Jamaica; that my difficulties were Ireland." Here was arduous work enough for any Cabinet: but the most insuperable difficulty in the way of that of Lord Melbourne was the Jamaica question.

Restoration of the Whig Ministers.

Hansard, xlvii. 987, 989.

On the reconstruction of the Ministry, the first business was to elect a new Speaker of the Commons. Mr. Abercromby had before wished to resign, on the plea of health. The House was sorry to part with him, for he had discharged his duty well. Mr. Charles Shaw Lefevre was chosen to succeed him by a majority of 18 over Mr. Goulburn, who was proposed by the Conservatives. This election took place on the 27th of May: and on the 30th, Mr. Labouchere introduced a new Jamaica Bill. The Opposition, under the circumstances, held the control of this measure, and it was amended in the Lords till it became what Sir R. Peel had proposed. It allowed time to the

Election of a Speaker.

Hansard, xlvii. 1050.

New Jamaica Bill.

1839.

Assembly to re-enact the annual laws without which the affairs of the island could not proceed; and invested the Governor in Council with power to renew those laws, at the expiration of two months after the Assembly should have separated without re-enacting them. This measure, which the Ministers declared to be, in their opinion, only better than none, passed its last parliamentary stage on the 9th of July.

Hansard, xlix. 85.

OFFICIAL CHANGES.

After the close of the Session, Lord J. Russell became Colonial Secretary in the place of Lord Normanby, who had held the office only since the preceding February. Lord Normanby went to the Home Office: and Mr. F. Baring became Chancellor of the Exchequer, in the place of Mr. Spring Rice, who entered the Upper House as Baron Monteagle. Lord Howick left the War Office, and was succeeded by Mr. Macaulay; and some changes took place in the minor functions of the Administration.

QUEEN'S ENGAGEMENT.

In the midst of such circumstances as have been exhibited, and of others which remain to be detailed—in view of the Colonial difficulties—the domestic distress which was now daily darkening over England—the violence of the Chartists—the critical state of Ireland—the sudden and portentous agitation against the Corn laws—the manifest feebleness of the Ministry—and the no less manifest misguidance of the young sovereign by her paternal Prime Minister—there was nothing that was more desired by the nation at large than to see their young Queen married. Every one knew that her consort—be he who he might—would have no concern with politics. It was not that. It was that the domestic life of the sovereign might be naturally compacted, and that a happy domestic life might be the point of support of her public life. Some rabid Tory gentlemen had lately grown insolent, and taken insufferable liberties with the royal name. Some mistakes had been made, in both public and private relations: and the natural and the most desirable security against other such misadventures seemed to be the placing of the virtuous young sovereign under the sanctities of a genuine home. There had been a constant succession of royal visitors from the continent—a long array of young princes who were called in the newspapers "the royal suitors:" but it was not till the beginning of 1839 that any general impression existed as to where the Queen's preference rested, or whether she had any. At last, however, it was no great surprise to any body when the Queen summoned her Privy Council to meet on the 23rd of November, and then communicated her intention to ally herself in marriage with Prince Albert of Saxe Coburg and Gotha. The Council requested her Majesty to allow the news to be made public: and the general satisfaction was all that she could have desired. It might have been wished that her intended husband should not have been her cousin-german, and that he should have been five or seven years older than the Queen, instead of three months younger; but there was every thing in the reputation of the Prince, and in the character of his thoughtful and informed mind, to encourage the hope that the connexion would be one of permanent satisfaction to the nation.

Annual Register, 1839, p. 313.

PRINCE ALBERT.

During the winter, the aspect of public affairs darkened so much that it was the universal wish that the marriage should take place with the least possible delay. The young pair had a far more thorough knowledge of each other than is usual in the case of lovers; they had been companions in childhood, and friends during their youth—there was nothing to wait for; and in a few weeks the young Queen became a wife, to the great joy of those who most desired that her life should be serene and happy. The marriage took place on the 10th of February, 1840, amidst fitting pomp and observance, in the palace of St. James's. It was precisely at a quarter before one o'clock that the firing of cannon announced to the inhabitants of London that the ring was placed on the finger of the bride: and a little before four, the Queen and her husband set out for Windsor, leaving London to the gaiety for which it had little spirits on any meaner occasion of that dark year. For the day all forgot their anxieties and fears in banquets and illuminations.

QUEEN'S MARRIAGE.
Annual Register, 1840, Chron. 15.

A month before the marriage took place, the Queen had declared to parliament in the royal Speech her intention of taking Prince Albert for her husband, and her confidence that her subjects would enable her to provide for such an establishment as might appear suitable to the rank of the Prince, and the dignity of the Crown. These announcements, in themselves as formidably unusual for a young girl to make as could be conceived, were offered with a simplicity and dignity that won all hearts: and the subsequent awkward conclusion to the discussion on the Prince's income was accepted by them both with the best possible grace.

Hansard, li. 1.

PRINCE ALBERT'S ANNUITY.

On the 20th of January, three weeks before their marriage, a bill for the naturalization of Prince Albert was introduced in the Lords, and passed rapidly, by the suspension of all the standing orders. The only stop in its progress was owing to the ordinary cause of delay in Whig measures—a mistake which could not be allowed to pass. Precedence next to the Queen was provided without any safeguard; so that, in case of the Queen's death without heirs, and the consequent accession of the King of Hanover, Prince Albert would have precedence of the then Heir Apparent, the Prince of Wales. The Ministers first amended their Bill by proposing to give precedence next after any Heir Apparent: but again, in order to avoid delay, Lord Melbourne declared his intention of omitting all that part of the Bill which related to the subject of precedence. Thus reduced to a project of simple naturalization, the Bill passed both Houses as rapidly as possible. In discussing the Address, some question had been made in both Houses about the omission of any declaration of Prince Albert being a Protestant—a scruple which was decided to be unnecessary, as, by the Act of Settlement, the Protestantism of the Royal Consort was an indispensable condition. All parties were eager to declare their conviction of the indisputable Protestantism of the Prince, whose family were the first protectors of the Reformation. There were some who could perhaps have told how much of the family pride of the Ducal family of Saxe Coburg and Gotha was invested in its connexion with Luther; and how in the Prince's portfolio might be seen sketches of the old castle on its height, finished with the care which is given to the delineation of sacred places—because there Luther took refuge for a time, and therein are his apartments—his bedstead itself—preserved with reverential care. If the object had been to select for the Queen the most Protestant of the Protestant princes of Germany, the searchers should have gone first to Saxony: and when there, to the old Castle of Coburg; and there, at Luther's table, or at the foot of Luther's worm-eaten pulpit, they would have found our Prince Albert.

BILL OF NATURALIZATION.
Hansard, li. 576.

Hansard, li. 11, 111.

1840.

ANNUITY.

Hansard, li. 554.

As to the annuity to be voted to the Prince—Lord J. Russell proposed that it should be, in accordance with precedents which he adduced, £50,000, to be granted out of the Consolidated Fund, to commence on the day of his marriage, and continue for life. After an adjournment from the 24th to the 27th of January, Mr. Hume moved that the amount should be £21,000. This proposal was voted down by a large majority. (Hansard, li. 611.) But it was clear that the times were unfavourable for a liberal grant. The distress of the manufacturing classes was becoming fearful—the price of wheat being at that time 81*s.* while the cotton mills were working short time; and the prevalent suffering was shown by armed outbreaks of Chartism, and the rapid sinking of the revenue. The Chancellor of the Exchequer was announcing a deficit with every successive Budget. At the close of the session of 1838, parliament, following the lead of the Ministers, had thought it right to refuse an augmentation of income to the Duke of Sussex, though the refusal compelled him to resign his office of President of the Royal Society; (Annual Register, 1838, p. 174.) and had also, by a narrow majority, decided against indemnifying their Speaker for the loss of his property by the fire which consumed the Houses of Parliament. (Annual Register, 1838, p. 174.) The sanguine and complacent Whig Ministry were now so truly alarmed at the aspect of affairs, that economy became naturally the ruling idea of the House of Commons. Yet, when the sum of £30,000 per annum was proposed by the Opposition, instead of the £50,000 of the Ministers, Lord J. Russell lost temper, and declared that the amendment was intended as a mark of disrespect to the Queen. For this, he was duly rebuked by Sir J. Graham and Sir R. Peel, (Hansard, li. 619, 625.) who showed reason enough for their advocacy of the smaller sum, independent of the distress of the country, which they did not conceive to be concerned in the question. (Hansard, li. 633.) The majority in favour of the smaller amount was 104 in a House of 420.

The Prince took all in good part. Kind-hearted and reasonable, he was perhaps really willing to bear his share of the pressure of the times, and ready to suppose that the House of Commons was the best judge of what his income ought to be. If not so, he was too sensible to show any discontent; and by his good-humour on the occasion he gained an esteem which was more worth having than any wealth that parliament could have given him.

CHAPTER XIV.

1840.

Dark Times.

ALLUSION has been made to the darkness of the times in 1839 and 1840. Since the Peace, there had hardly been a season so gloomy in fact and in prospect. In looking for the causes of the misery and crime of this period, we find them, as usual, in the state of the crops. There were then, as usual, multitudes of people who did not understand: and the fact and their failure to understand it together were soon to bring about the greatest social, as Parliamentary Reform was the greatest political, event of the century. There were then, as usual, professional men, country gentlemen, and others by hundreds, who said with an air of superiority, that they took no interest in politics: and these were the men who concluded that the commotions and outrages of the period were owing to the unfortunate propensity of "the lower classes" to concern themselves with politics. There were then, as usual, clergymen by hundreds, who said with a complacent smile, or an air of pious trust, that since England was England there had always been alarms of bad crops; but that it always ended in there being a harvest; these gentlemen not having the remotest idea of the differences between one group of years and another as to production of food, and never perceiving that it was their especial duty as clergymen to look closely into the causes of want, woe, and crime. They thought that the perverseness of the heart of man was explanation enough of any amount, or capricious accession of guilt; and, as they could not stoop to politics or political economy, they remained unaware that the average of moral disease might be anticipated as confidently as that of physical disease, from the estimate of the harvests of any group of years. It was no thanks to them that this miserable experiment is now no longer likely to be tried. It is no thanks to them that, by opening to our country an access to the harvests of the world, a prospect lies before us of a more equable supply and price of food, and a cessation of the fluctuations and cruel uncertainties which perilled the fortunes of the well-fed, and wore out the heart and hope of the multitudes who had to win their bread from day to day.—There were still hundreds and thousands of men—and the leading politicians of both parties were among them—who thought that to attack the Corn laws was to attack the constitution of society; who would no more listen to evidence of the mischief of agricultural protection than they would listen to arguments against the institution of property. It is worth recording again here that the Prime Minister himself had volunteered his opinion on the matter in the House of Lords, saying that he had heard of many mad things in his life; but, before God, the idea of repealing the Corn laws was the maddest he had ever heard of. Thus it was with Lord Melbourne. Lord J. Russell counselled the House to refuse to hear evidence on the operation of the Corn laws. Sir R. Peel was as yet pondering sliding scales, and destined to propose and try another before he should dis-

1840. cover that this was a matter in which adjustments could be of no possible use, while they were pretty sure to do mischief. To set against all these classes of men, there was another—a little band at first, but soon becoming a host—who understood the matter enough to be sure of attaining a thorough knowledge of it, as soon as they should combine to act upon what they knew. The darkening of the times in 1839 determined these men to aim at a repeal of the Corn laws as the first object to their own fortunes, to the actual preservation of the working classes, and to the welfare of the nation at large.

Successive Harvests.

Tooke's History of Prices, Continuation, p. 3.

During the four years from 1832 to 1835 inclusive, more wheat was grown in Great Britain, it is believed, than was ever known before. More wheat was sown; and the improvements in tillage were by that time so considerable as to produce clear results. But during those four years also the winters had no undue frosts; the spring rains were enough, and not too much; and the summer suns were warm enough to harden and ripen the grain. They were four noble harvests, as far as wheat was concerned, though barley rose nearly to the price of wheat, and hay and pulse were dear. The farmers suffered, as they were apt to do, under a stringent corn law which made them rich in bad seasons, and prepared for their impoverishment in abundant years. But while they were in such adversity as that Royal speeches commiserated them, and Parliament discussed their case, every body else was prospering. The very cattle, sheep, and pigs, were eating wheat: brewers and distillers were making beer and spirits from it. The agricultural labourers, though receiving very low wages, were more comfortable than usual, from the cheapness of provisions. They found themselves in easier circumstances with 8*s.* per week, and wheat at 35*s.*, than with 12*s.* per week, and wheat at 77*s.* As for all other working classes of the kingdom, it was a time of high prosperity for them. All the mines and all the mills were busy, and the tradesmen of the towns were every where prosperous; for the largest classes of society were employed on full wages; and bread being cheap, they had money to spare for other objects of purchase. The houses of the operatives filled with furniture; and their chests with good clothes. The tradesmen rose in proportion, from this increase of custom, and in their turn improved the condition of the manufacturers, who, in consequence, kept up or extended their manufacture, to the continued benefit of the operatives. Such was the happy state of things while we were blessed with good harvests: and the prosperity reached its height towards the close of 1835, when wheat was at 35*s.* 4*d.* Owing to its cheapness, less was now sown of wheat, and more of other things which had become dear.

In 1836, the spring was cold and dry; and the summer was ungenial in the north of England and Scotland; so that the harvest was not well got in. On the whole, there was a considerable falling off from preceding years; but still, more than enough was got in for the wants of the country till the harvest of 1837. The crop of 1837 was just sufficient for the wants of the country; but it was inferior to the production of any one of the five preceding seasons. The people were still eating abundantly, as the last few years had accustomed them to do. If now there had been a propitious season, every thing might have gone on smoothly, though food prices were higher than they had been. During the commercial difficulties of the spring of 1837, which have been before exhibited, when credit was disturbed by foreign influences, the price of wheat, as

Tooke's Prices, Con. p. 7.

of other things, had risen unduly; but at the end of 1837, it was 53*s.*: and at this price, manufactures, commerce, and the condition of the people, might have gone on without deterioration. But the weather was now dreadful. In the middle of January an extraordinary frost set in, which lasted so long as to occasion serious fears for the wheat in the ground; and in February, the price rose to 55*s.* 3*d.* In March, it rose further; and again in May, when frosts recurred. In July it was 68*s.* As harvest prospects did not improve, the price of wheat rose to 77*s.* in the third week in August. In September, all the bonded wheat in the kingdom was entered for home consumption. Prices fell as a large quantity of foreign corn was thrown into the market in September: but by the next January, wheat was at 81*s.* 6*d.* The difference of quantity home-grown between 1834 and this date was above 7,000,000 of quarters.—At the same time, and in strict connexion with this deficiency, manufactures had fallen off, and the prices of articles in common use among the working classes had risen; so that those classes found themselves now receiving less wages, and compelled to pay dear for the necessaries of life. The distress was becoming formidable. Yet were hundreds of the clergy smiling over the usual alarms, as they called them, about the harvests; and the gentry who prided themselves on taking no interest in politics, discoursed upon the perverseness and wickedness of the human heart, which led men into discontent and rebellion, while living in the best country in the world. There was some increase in the wages of agricultural labour; and this was pointed out as a proof that high prices bring high wages; whereas, the slight and temporary rise of agricultural wages fell far short of the increased expenditure of the labourers for food.

Tooke's Prices, Con. p. 11.

In May, 1839, there was snow by day, and frost, of some continuance, by night. So much foreign corn had been let in, that prices had fallen, wheat being at 67*s.* 10*d.* in July. More foreign corn was let out of bond; yet, so bad were the prospects of the harvest, that by the middle of August wheat was again at 72*s.* 3*d.* More foreign wheat, dry and sound, was wanted to render our own damp and unripened grain fit for food: and, instead of our importing largely from Ireland, it was necessary to import more dry foreign wheat into Ireland than we could obtain of her damp and unripened grain. There was every ground for apprehension that, while the working classes were grievously underfed, there would still be a deficiency of 2,000,000 quarters or more, while waiting for the next harvest.

Tooke's Prices, Con. p. 16.

During this time, the "landed interest" were watchful over their protecting law, suspecting, reasonably enough, that attempts would be made to relieve the suffering classes from its pressure. The closeness of their vigilance was shown by a curious incident which took place in March, 1838. Colonel Seale proposed in the House, that, to save merchants engaged in foreign trade from the necessity of obtaining their ship-supplies of food from the ports of the Baltic, permission should be given to grind the corn held in bond in our own ports—security being afforded for the exportation of the flour. To many of the most Conservative members in the House, the case appeared so clearly harmless to the British cultivator, that the first reading of the Bill was carried by a large majority: but the "landed interest" made so great an outcry about

Hansard, xli. 1079.

Grinding of Corn in Bond.

touching the Corn question at all, that on the second reading the Bill was thrown out by a majority of 220 to 150.

Hansard, xlii. 1042.

The natural consequences of popular distress showed themselves exactly as might have been expected; and with increasing force from year to year. If the rulers of the country did not understand the causes of the adversity, it was no wonder that the uneducated sufferers did not. While professional men and other gentry ascribed the turbulence of the time to the ingratitude of the human heart, the government—the Cabinet, and both Houses of parliament—were sure of nothing so thoroughly as that the Corn laws had nothing to do with the distress, and therefore that their repeal would not cure it:—and the working classes never doubted that the government could cure it if they would, and that the manufacturers oppressed them by appropriating an undue share of the proceeds of manufactures. Thus, the clergy obtained no hold over the classes which most needed their counsel and consolations; or, if they got them into the churches, preached to exasperated hearers, who said on week-days that they would not be put off with promises of bliss hereafter, from claiming the simple recompense of labour in this life. The government sat, in its deliberations, on the crust of a volcano; and amidst successive warnings, was not half conscious of its danger. When a spurt of flame or a jet of hot stones scared them now and then, they threw cold water into the particular crevice, or blocked it up with rubbish, and supposed the fire was put out. The Whig Attorney-General, Sir John Campbell, declared at a public breakfast at Edinburgh, in the autumn of 1839, that Chartism was extinct—because Birmingham and Newcastle had been quieted.—At the same time, the Trade Unions became formidable to the last degree. On the trial of some cotton-spinners at Glasgow, and on inquiry into the trade combinations of Dublin, facts came out which appalled all who heard of the evidence. On no occasion did Mr. O'Connell appear to more advantage than in his action on this subject. At the risk of much unpopularity, he denounced these combinations with his whole power of feeling and eloquence;—combinations, not to obtain certain terms of recompense by fair association for an open object, but to ruin capitalists by burning their mills, and to oppress fellow-labourers, by forbidding them to work on terms which they were willing to accept. It came out that threatening letters were sent to masters, and premiums were offered for firing their mills: that working men were beaten, sent away to foreign countries, burned with vitriol, kept in fear of their lives; and, as there was too much reason to believe, actually murdered. During this activity of the Trades Unions, the impoverishing of the operatives went on at an increased rate; for they were compelled to pay for the expenses of the combination while they had any funds left. The Chancellor of the Exchequer noticed in the House, in May, 1838, the remarkable diminution of the deposits in Savings Banks. This brought the operative class all the sooner upon the funds of the capitalists. From working the mills short time, in order to prolong the prospect of any work at all, the mill-owners were soon working even the short time at a loss, rather than turn the poor people adrift entirely; and their capital was melting away from week to week—given to feed the poor as truly as if it had been paid as poor-rate.—Meantime, Lord Ashley was regarding this class of men as oppressors who wrung their wealth

Discontents.

Spectator, 1839, p. 1034.

Trade Unions.

Hansard, xlii. 1368.

Factory Question.

Hansard, xliii. 975, 6.

out of the sinews of children; and every session renewed his motion for the protection of factory children; while the Ministers, who evidently did not understand the case, paltered with it in a way which drew on them a severe rebuke from Sir R. Peel: "For the government to say," were his words, "session after session, that it would bring in a bill on the subject; for the government, session after session, to abandon the bills they introduce, without permitting others to be brought in by individuals in their stead—is like applying a perpetual blister to the sides of the country, and keeping up the fever and irritation of a dangerous sore. . . . . It is because I cannot fail to perceive the competition with which this country is threatened—it is because I see that the interests of humanity, in the large view of the question, are likely to be less consulted by the short-sighted restriction of labour, than they are by its perfect freedom—it is because the fact is unquestionable, that though you may exempt the child from fatigue, you also deprive it of prospective employment, by driving the manufacturers to seek elsewhere that protection which is denied them at home—it is for these reasons that I implore parliament to decide the question this night, whether it will legislate or not."—It was not decided that night, nor for some years afterwards. After that session, Mr. Poulett Thomson, who understood the matter, appeared no more in the House: and when he was gone, the other Whig ministers appeared unable to hold the convictions they occasionally expressed against legislative interference with factory labour. Thus was the irritation of this "perpetual blister" added to the many others under which employers and labourers were suffering. The mill-owners resented this interference with the management of their affairs, which operated as a reduction of the value of the machinery which they had put up in the expectation of freedom in making their arrangements—seeing, all the time, how fruitless must be all attempts to legislate between parents and children, and how manufactures must droop under arbitrary restrictions imposed by the legislature. The operatives were kept in a state of agitation, whatever might be their opinions on the subject. Some fretted at the refusal of the legislature to let Lord Ashley take care of their children; while those of an opposite way of thinking declared it no time to be preventing their families from earning all they could, and resented this interference with their only possession, their labour, as the most flagrant attack yet attempted on the rights of the poor. All this did not tend to the tranquillization of the country.

Chartism.

During the latter part of 1838, when Chartist meetings were held frequently, and with a formidable aspect throughout the north of England, the Home Secretary, Lord John Russell, had shown a humane anxiety to bring the ignorant crowd to their senses, and within the limits of order, without visiting their guilty leaders with any treatment which could be construed as persecution, and be made to yield the ordinary fruits of persecution. Many complaints were made of want of vigour in this method of proceeding; but there appears every reason to believe that the disorder of the time would have been more violent if severity had been used, instead of being extinguished. Under a Sidmouth rule at the Home Office, we might have seen all the north of England in a blaze of rebellion before the end of 1838. As it was, matters grew too threatening to be left to take their course without check. Great allowance was to be made for the irritation of the Lancashire operatives, from suffering of body and mind: but, in the month of November, the torch-light meetings became formidable enough to alarm the inhabitants at large, to whom protection was due. On the 22nd of that month, the Home Secretary sent a letter to the Lancashire magistrates, requesting them to make public notification of the illegality of torch-light meetings of the kind then in fashion, and to declare their intention of preventing or dispersing such meetings. This was followed up, in the middle of December, by a Royal Proclamation, which enjoined all persons to desist from holding torch-light meetings.—It was time to put some restraint on the leaders and orators of these meetings; for now the Rev. J. Stephens, the chief orator, had denounced a mill-owner at Ashton-under-Lyne as "a devil's magistrate," and had prophesied that "his house would soon be too hot to hold him;" and this gentleman's factory was fired one night soon after, while Stephens was holding forth to a torch-light assemblage. Stephens was arrested before the end of the month, but admitted to bail, while awaiting his trial at the Liverpool assizes. While out on bail, he preached to crowded congregations, with a violence of language which looked like insanity. Some of the witnesses against him were respectable Wesleyans, who had sat under his father's ministry, and were most reluctant to appear against the agitator: but they knew so much of the sharpening of pikes and preparation of fire-arms, and were so alarmed and distressed at the spread of a spirit of murderous rebellion in a neighbourhood generally quiet, that they could not doubt their obligation to get Mr. Stephens silenced by the law. He was sentenced to an imprisonment of a year and a half in Knutsford gaol.—A far more respectable and reasonable man was chairman of some of the earlier meetings—among others, at the great Kersal Moor meeting at Manchester, when not fewer than 200,000 persons are said to have been congregated—Mr. Fielden, the member for Oldham—the great promoter, under Lord Ashley, of the Ten Hour measure. Mr. Fielden was a man of great benevolence, and of a disinterestedness which gave him an influence among men better informed than himself, which he had not judgment or knowledge to command. He was too good for such work as the grosser kind of Chartist agitation, when he once saw what it was becoming; but his early sanction of torch-light meetings was a mistake to be regretted. The other leaders at this period were Richard Oastler, of Leeds, whose complacent ignorance unfitted him for any task of political guidance; and Feargus O'Connor, whose only escape from a charge of cruel fraud on his followers for a course of years is in an admission of such senselessness and ignorance as have made him the worst enemy of those whom he professed to serve. It is very probable that from the moment when Feargus O'Connor first placed himself at the head of a Chartist procession to the last stoppage of his Land-scheme, he may have fancied himself a sort of Saviour of the working classes; but if so, he must bear the contempt and compassionate disapproval of all men of ordinary sense and knowledge, as the only alternative from their utter reprobation.

Spectator, 1838, p. 1155.

Torch-light Meetings.

Spectator, 1838, p. 1173.

After 1839 came in, new leaders and new mobs arose, and also a more respectable association, which deserved better than to be connected in name and reputation with the Chartism of the Stephenses and Oastlers, and the torch-bearers who fired factories. Delegates were sent from the working classes to form a convention in London, for the promotion of the rights of the Commons

National Convention.

of England, and especially for calling the Commons House to account for its neglect of the interests of the working classes. This National Convention could not effect much, from the want of intellectual discipline, political knowledge, and business habits, among the members: but it was so clear in its reprobation of physical force for the attainment of its objects, so free from rapacity in its aims, and so earnest in its pursuit of rights and privileges which are legitimate and virtuous objects of desire, that it was regarded with kindness by all good-hearted and unprejudiced men, however little hope or fear they might feel from its proceedings. This kindly feeling was very evident on the presentation of the National Petition prepared by the Convention, and carried into the House of Commons on the 14th of June. It was a wonderful document: "a cylinder of parchment about the diameter of a coach-wheel—literally rolled into the House;"—and signed by upwards of 1,200,000 persons. The ordinary rule of permitting no speech on the presentation of a petition was disregarded on this occasion; and when a member desired, in insolent language, to stop the business, he was resisted by the feeling of the House and the indulgent disposition of the Speaker. So Mr. Attwood was allowed, by a listening House, to advocate the plea of the petitioners for the "recovery of those ancient privileges" which were "the original and constitutional rights of the Commons of England." The temper of the House showed that the effort was not altogether in vain, though no legislative consequences could be expected to ensue. No persons in England better deserved a respectful hearing than this million of petitioners: and there is reason to believe that no persons in England more sincerely mourned the outbreaks of the physical-force Chartists during this year than the leaders of the National Convention. The Petition occasioned a good deal of discussion in the House, when, on the 12th of July, a committee was moved for to consider the Five Points of the petition—Universal Suffrage, Vote by Ballot, Annual Parliaments, Remuneration of Members, and Abolition of the Property Qualification;—but the committee was refused by a majority of 189 in a House of 281.

NATIONAL PETITION. Spectator, 1839, p. 557.

FIVE POINTS.

Hansard, xlix. 274.

The Home Secretary remained on the watch during the first half of the year—till assured by the Attorney-General that Chartism was extinct. In February, he called to account a magistrate of the borough of Newport, in Monmouthshire, a Mr. Frost, for violent language at a public meeting. Mr. Frost's replies were insolent in the extreme; but, as there had been at the outset one of the ordinary Whig mistakes, in supposing him a magistrate of the county instead of the borough, and as Mr. Frost disclaimed a part of the charge, he was not at once removed. This was a stretch of forbearance much censured when the event showed Mr. Frost's unworthiness of it: but he soon provoked his removal; and it does not appear that the gentleness used towards him in the first instance had any effect in promoting the subsequent rebellion; while it was valuable as proving the disposition of the government to lenity in a time of popular suffering. In April, there was a Chartist riot at Devizes; or rather, a rising of the people of Devizes, under Tory leadership, against the Chartist assemblage of labourers who came, a thousand strong, armed with bludgeons, to hold a meeting in the market-place.—In July, Birmingham was kept in a state of disturbance for many days by Chartist turbulence. Sixty policemen were sent to Birmingham, on application from the authorities of the town;

FROST. Annual Register, 1839. Chron. 22.

RIOTS AT DEVIZES. Annual Register, 1839. Chron. 49.

AT BIRMINGHAM. Annual Register 1839. Chron. 103, 104.

1840.

and a collision ensued between the police and the mob, which was ended only by the appearance of a troop of cavalry, after some stabs and many blows had been given. The interference was resented by some of the better order of Chartist leaders, in published resolutions, for the seditious character of which the authors suffered trial and imprisonment. The riot took place on Thursday, the 4th of July. On the Sunday evening, a mob stopped the service at St. Philip's Church. On Monday, the police and military again dispersed a meeting. On Tuesday, the Chartists, having been denied the use of the Town Hall, met in an open space. The Rifles were called to disperse the assemblage, but were so assailed that they were ordered to load and make ready. Before they fired, a troop of Dragoons came down upon the mob, who then fled. The inhabitants hoped that the mischief was over: but on the 15th, a far worse outbreak took place. First, windows and street lamps were smashed; then iron palisades were torn up; houses were forced, warehouses pillaged, and bonfires made of the contents; lights put out in the streets, and finally, houses burned down. It was by the military that the outbreak was overcome at last: and it was some days before the orderly classes of the town could take any rest. By that time they were very weary and very wrathful; weary with patrolling the streets, and keeping watch against incendiary fires; and angry with that most painful sort of wrath which has in it a mixture of fear. Some of the best workmen in Birmingham were Chartists. Some of the most indispensable men in the town had become insufferably insolent to their employers, without the excuse of hunger which was admissible in the case of too many of the Lancashire malcontents. Many of the Birmingham Chartists might have been ten-pound householders, and in possession of all the substantial comforts of life, if they had been capable of the prudence and self-denial which had raised some of their employers from a position like their own: and it was exasperating to their employers to be insulted in their own manufactories, and their business put to hazard, by men whom they could not well dismiss, but by whom they were told that all capitalists were tyrants, born with a silver spoon in their mouths, and so on. The evil here was clearly not political. It was social—the master evil of popular ignorance, under which it appeared but too probable that society must be dissolved, sooner or later, if popular enlightenment could not be achieved. Yet Birmingham is one of the best of our towns, in regard to means of popular instruction. Sheffield is another; but in Sheffield, matters were even worse. Besides the usual manœuvres of breaking windows, extinguishing the street lights, and pelting the soldiery, the malcontents planned the murder of some of the best and kindest-hearted gentlemen of the place. At Newcastle-upon-Tyne, at Stockport, at Manchester, as well as in the neighbourhood of London, assemblages were attempted for purposes of intimidation, and dispersed with more or less of difficulty. One of the most painful incidents was the extortion of money or goods from shopkeepers, under intimidation; a practice which called forth a letter from the Home Secretary to the magistrates of Manchester, encouraging them to use the most vigorous means to put down this method of pillage. Many who leaned towards the Chartists before, in sympathy if not in conviction, gave them up altogether on the appearance of this symptom of the agitation. One of the strange caprices of the malcontents

Annual Register, 1839. Chron. 109—112.

At Sheffield.

At Newcastle, &c.

Annual Register, 1839. Chron. 133.

was attending the cathedrals and other churches in overwhelming numbers, and wearing some sort of badge. Five hundred of them went in procession to St. Paul's, in August. At first, most of them insisted on wearing their hats; but they yielded the point to the verger, and behaved very quietly. On the next Sunday, Norwich cathedral was crowded to the last foot-hold by the Chartists of the city; to whom the Bishop in his sermon offered a strong but kind remonstrance. At the Old Church at Manchester, there was a singular scene, if the record of the time be true. The Chartists quitted the church on the giving out of the text of the sermon: and the reason is said to be that, instead of accepting the scripture verse prescribed beforehand by his Chartist hearers, the preacher chose "My house is the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves." For the preacher's sake, we must hope that the choice of his text had no reference to the Chartists. This mode of action —by filling the churches—was soon given up, as it evidently did not aid the Chartist cause, and was wisely passed over in quietness: and it had ceased before the autumn, with those other demonstrations, whose discontinuance had persuaded the Attorney-General himself that Chartism was extinct.

Annual Register, 1839. Chron. 151.

It was only a lull: and that Edinburgh declaration was mischievous during the ensuing weeks, as showing that the Ministers were off their guard—to say nothing of its tone of triumph, which was any thing but conciliatory. Mr. Frost was awake and active, and far from grateful for the leniency which had afforded him an opportunity for remaining in the magistracy at the beginning of the year. On the 3rd of November, which was on Sunday, his brother magistrates at Newport had information that he was marching down large bodies of armed men from the hills upon the town. The attack upon the town was to have been made in the night: but the weather was bad; and the malcontents did not muster in sufficient force till the morning, when, at about ten o'clock, they entered the town. They attacked the hotel where the military were stationed, and provoked the destruction of more than twenty of their number. The magistrates acted with eminent discretion and courage; the mayor, especially, so distinguishing himself that he was afterwards knighted at Windsor Castle. Frost's followers amounted to upwards of 7000 when within the town, and there were very many more upon the hills.

At Newport.

The conspiracy, frustrated by bad weather, and the good conduct of the Newport authorities, was found to be a truly formidable one, from its orderly arrangements, the number of persons in the district involved in the scheme, and its connexion with the Chartists of Birmingham and other places. Two other leaders, Jones and Williams, were arrested and tried with Frost. There could be no doubt of the enormity of their crime in leading this rebellion; and it was not easy to see on what plea their pardon could be asked. It was asked, however—even demanded, from time to time, for some years; but it was enough that their lives were spared. If their punishment of transportation were remitted, it is difficult to see who should be punished. Many who lamented the transportation of the Dorsetshire labourers could see no excuse for Frost, Williams, and Jones.

Frost, Williams, and Jones.

The state of things was very fearful. The great unsolved question of the rights of labour lay at the bottom of these perplexities and prevalent discontents; and nobody saw it—nobody who could obtain a hearing, or in any way

Origin of the Anti-Corn-Law League.

1840. exhibit the facts. Those who saw any thing of the truth were precisely those to whom a hearing was denied—the more enlightened of the manufacturing and trading class who were turned back from the doors of the legislature when they asked the Commons to listen to proof of the disorganizing tendency of the Corn laws. The Chartists understood nothing of the operation of the Corn laws against their interests: and they were so far from comprehending their own existing rights, while demanding others, that they permitted pretended friends to urge the legislature to take from them the command of their only possession—their labour. Tory agitators went among them to incite them to demand Ten Hour bills, and to alienate them from asking a free supply of food. To obtain a free admission of food was only a part of the satisfaction of the great difficulty—of the rights of labour; but it was a very important part—at the time, the chief and most immediately pressing consideration: but the government did not see it; neither House of the legislature saw it, any more than the Chartists; and they believed that the men who had begun to agitate for it were disturbing an old system, the radical policy of the empire, for the sake of enlarging the margin of manufacturing profits, and putting more money into their own pockets, without giving the operatives their share. All this was mournful blindness and folly; but the final action against the Corn laws had fairly begun; and those who were engaged in it knew that their end was secure. If the great labour question could remain a matter of controversy till the corn question should be settled, instead of becoming one of revolution, all might yet be well: and to accomplish this, the anti-corn-law agitators set to work with a zeal, a knowledge, a pertinacity, and a spirit of self-sacrifice, probably unequalled in the history of peaceful agitation. When their work was done, and they looked back upon its beginning, they were surprised to find how little they themselves knew when they first devoted themselves to the cause. The deepest of them had scarcely an idea how closely the interests of the agricultural classes were involved in the establishment of a free trade in food, and how society was injured through all its ramifications by an artificial restriction in the first article of human necessity: but what they did know was clear; as far as they reasoned, their reasoning was sound; and if one part of their view was more clear and sound than another, it was that of the implication of this question with the larger and deeper one of the rights of labour, which was elsewhere causing only that perilous agitation that must issue either in suppression by force on the one hand, or in revolution on the other. The anti-corn-law agitators were, at this period, the only true conservatives in the whole range of our society.

On the 18th of September, 1838, a public dinner was given to Dr. Bowring at Manchester, when the persons present (between fifty and sixty) agreed to form themselves into an association for the promotion of the principles of free trade. They soon organized their force, settled their scheme of public instruction and political movement, raised subscriptions, were sanctioned by the Manchester Chamber of Commerce, and made known their existence to the large towns of England and Scotland by recommending similar associations in them all. This was the origin of the Anti-Corn-Law League.

At the beginning of 1839, we find assembled in London a large body of delegates from Manchester, Birmingham, and Glasgow, and the great manu-

Spectator, 1839, p. 134.

facturing towns, whose business it was to examine and analyze the House of Commons, in regard to the Corn law question—to watch over its action on that question, and see how far professions were supported by knowledge and sincerity on either side; and to challenge the House, collectively and individually, by offering to prove at its bar all the allegations they had made against the operation of the Corn laws. We find the metropolitan boroughs holding meetings to appoint delegates on their own behalf, and passing resolutions of discontent at the omission of the topic of the Corn laws from the Queen's speech. On the 7th of February, when Mr. Villiers had given notice of a motion that evidence on the operation of the Corn laws should be heard at the bar, Lord J. Russell made a little speech which caused a stronger sensation than some of the longest he had ever delivered. It was copied into the newspapers with a declaration that it made one's blood boil; and the universal impression, among men of all parties, seems to have been, that it proved him so unaware of the existing circumstances and temper of the nation as to injure his immediate reputation and influence, and to weaken him, unaccountably to himself, in every one of the various positions in regard to the Corn law question, in which he afterwards endeavoured to establish himself. He said "the impression on his mind was that it would be his duty to oppose the motion as to hearing evidence at the bar. He had not as yet found sufficient reasons or precedents to induce him to adopt that course. At the same time he must say, that as there would be a great deal of discussion relating to facts, when a mode was proposed which he thought was conformable to precedent, and not inconvenient to the House, by which these facts could be ascertained, he should be willing, although not ready to propose it himself, to support a motion so to ascertain the facts." This might have been taken as a matter of course from Sir R. Peel in those days—this speech about propriety and precedent, and the convenience of the House, in regard to a matter about which 3,000,000 of the best subjects in the empire had sent up representatives to London, and a message to parliament. Such a speech would have suited Sir R. Peel's then position and views with regard to the Corn laws. But Lord J. Russell had declared to his Stroud constituents that the existing Corn laws were indefensible; and he declared on this very night that he believed the time to be come for a change. The delegates who were analyzing the House now knew where to place Lord J. Russell on their lists. He disapproved the Corn laws in the abstract—just as the Carolina planters disapprove slavery in the abstract. In both cases, when an opportunity for acting from that disapprobation occurs, the action goes over to the other side. This was proved on the 18th of the same month, when, the Cabinet being divided on Mr. Villiers's motion, Lord J. Russell voted against it, with Lord Howick, Lord Palmerston, Mr. Spring Rice, and some minor officials, while Mr. Poulett Thomson, in this his last session in parliament, and Sir J. C. Hobhouse, voted for inquiry. Mr. Villiers's speech that night was not lost. It was a statement of singular force and clearness; and the occasion was destined to great celebrity. Of all the many weak and blind acts of the Whig Ministers, none was more memorable than this refusal to hear evidence on a subject whose importance they professed to admit; and Mr. Villiers's position was conspicuous in proportion to their fall. On that

Delegates.

Spectator, 1839, p. 129.

The Ministers.

Hansard, xlv. 156.

Motion for Inquiry.

1840. night he assumed his post undisputed as the head authority in the legislature on the subject of the Corn laws; and from that night the Whig Ministers who opposed his motion lost all chance of being generally trusted in any popular action on that subject. If they had understood this as others understood it, their exit from power two years afterwards would have been made in another manner than it was. The majority of the Commons against inquiry was 361 to 172. As for the Peers, they would not entertain the subject at all. Lord Brougham laid the case before them in a strong and able statement: but they negatived it without a division.

Hansard, xlv. 691.

REFUSED.

CONSEQUENCES.

Spectator, 1839, p. 178.

The delegates met, and passed votes of thanks to Lord Brougham and Mr. Villiers. Among the hopeful speakers was Richard Cobden. There was no cause for despondency, he said, because the House over the way had refused to hear them. They were the representatives of three millions of people—they were the evidence that the great towns had banded themselves together, and their alliance would be a Hanseatic League against their feudal Corn law plunderers. The castles which crowned the rocks along the Rhine, the Danube, and the Elbe, had once been the stronghold of feudal oppressors; but they had been dismantled by a League; and they now only adorned the landscape as picturesque memorials of the past, while the people below had lost all fear of plunder, and tilled their vineyards in peace. A public dinner at one of the theatres was offered to the delegates; but they were leaving town. They made no secret of why they were leaving town:—it was to meet again at Manchester. The upholders of the Corn laws were quite at ease when they no longer saw the train of delegates going down to the House. Yet there were not wanting voices of warning which told them that the matter was not over. While one register of the time tells, with easy satisfaction, that the vote of the Commons "had the effect of putting the question to rest, and no more was heard of it—during the remainder of the session," another is found giving warning that the departure of the delegates was like the breaking-up of a Mahratta camp—the war was not over, but only the mode of attack about to be changed. There was no secrecy about the new mode of attack. The delegates had offered to instruct the House; the House had refused to be instructed; the House must be instructed; and the way now contemplated was the grandest, and most unexceptionable and effectual—it was to be by instructing the nation. The delegates were to meet again at Manchester in a fortnight, to devise their method of general instruction, which, in its seven years' operation, approached more nearly to a genuine National Education than any scheme elsewhere at work. By the Anti-corn-law League the people at large were better trained to thought and its communication, to the recognition of principles, the obtaining of facts, and the application of the same faculties and the same interest to their public as to their private affairs, than by any methods of intellectual development yet tried under the name of Education.

The present was a time when minds were feverish, and disposed to undue alarm from any untoward circumstance: and the Queen was made to bear her share of the uneasy excitement of the period. It was no wonder that, as all eminent persons are likely to occupy the visions of infirm minds, a young Queen should be especially liable to the intrusions of the insane. It was no wonder to any body that one lunatic, having crept up to the garden steps of

ATTACKS ON THE QUEEN.

Buckingham palace, should threaten her Majesty because no Protestant should occupy the throne of England; nor that another, having leaped the enclosures at Windsor, should demand admittance to the Castle as King of England; and so forth. But there were worse alarms than these, for two or three years. At first, there really was terror when a pistol was fired near the royal carriage, in the course of the Queen's drives. Her popularity was by no means what it had been. Sometimes silence, and sometimes disagreeable cries in the streets and the theatres, indicated this. The disheartened and suffering people could not understand how the Prime Minister could properly conduct the public business while seen daily with the Queen or heard of at her parties; nor how so much money could be properly spent upon the Queen's banquets and balls while so many poor were starving; nor how the Queen could enjoy festivities for six days in the week while there was so much mourning in the land. When one pistol shot after another was directed at the Queen's carriage within two or three years, it was clearly proved in each case that there was no conspiracy, and no immediate working of political discontent; yet the general impression was that the odious act might not have been attempted in a season of prosperity and satisfaction. The first case, which occurred on the 10th of June, 1840, was a type of the rest, and may serve for a notice of them all. A youth of eighteen or nineteen, named Oxford, who was foolish, if not insane, fired two pistol shots at the Queen in her phaeton on Constitution Hill. He was poor and ignorant; and it was so impossible to find any cause for the act, that he was pronounced insane, and given over to a lunatic asylum for life. On this first occasion, the excitement was so strong—"members of parliament applying for locks of Oxford's hair when it was cut off"—the whole aristocratic crowd in the Parks escorting the Queen home with cheers, and the affair appearing in capital letters in the newspapers for weeks, that it is not surprising that an ignorant person here and there, with a morbid longing for notoriety, should try to get it by shooting at the Queen. This became so well understood after a time, and it was clear that the risk to the Queen was, at the same time, so nearly nothing, that such affairs were treated as they should be—as nuisances which might best be put a stop to by contempt and an ignominious punishment: and, during the next period, an act passed by which such a prank was punished by whipping, accompanying imprisonment or transportation. The most abiding incident connected with this first attack is one which it is now—and was yet more at the time—pleasant to note. At the top of Constitution Hill, the Queen spoke to her husband, and the carriage, at his order, turned from the Hyde Park entrance down Grosvenor Place. The Queen had thought of her mother, and went to her that the Duchess of Kent might see that her daughter was safe before any other notice of the attack reached her. Of such attacks no more mention will be made. The Queen has no enemies among her people. Sovereigns who lead innocent lives and have no political power have no enemies among their people; and the pointing of a pistol at the royal carriage—a pistol now without a bullet, and now without a lock—by some poor creature who courts arrest, is an incident of which this cursory notice is sufficient. The first occurrence of the kind, however, certainly did not tend to relieve the depression of the period.

1840.

Annual Register, 1839. Chron. 79.

Annual Register, 1839. Chron. 246.

Annual Register, 1840. Law Cases, p. 215.

1840.

Dockyard Fires.

Storms.

Compn. to Almanac, 1840, p. 256.

Repeal Agitation.

Compn. to Almanac, 1841, p. 255.

Ante, vol. i. p. 311.

Troubles in the East.

Birth of the Princess Royal. Annual Register, 1840, Chron. 110.

Some accidents went to increase the gloom. There were several dockyard fires happening so near together, and so mysteriously, as to excite fears of treachery: but one proved to be from spontaneous combustion, and another from an accident. The storms were severe and disastrous; and one in the winter of 1839 was more like a tropical hurricane than a mere winter storm in our own seas. Twenty persons were killed in Liverpool streets, and a hundred drowned on the neighbouring shores. Dublin was like a sacked city—some houses unroofed, and others burning from the flight of sparks and brands. The Repeal agitation was advancing in Ireland so formidably, that the Lord Lieutenant publicly declared at this time, that he should oppose to it the whole power of the government; and that all countenance of the government should be withheld from those who took part in it. There had been a new, though futile rebellion in Canada. As for the East—it required some courage to look that way. What a thoughtful man had been saying for years, that we should be compelled to conquer China, was now coming true. In the next period of our History we shall have to tell of the Chinese war which was now beginning. In India, matters were in a more fearful state still. The blow had not fallen yet—the blow which annihilated an Indian army; but it was felt that something terrible was impending; and in fact, some very bad news was on the way. Under such accumulated gloom, destined yet to deepen for some time, it was a thought of comfort to the nation that the Queen was safe in the honour and repose of a home: and it was a matter of general rejoicing when the blessings of that home were enriched by the birth of a daughter on the 21st of November, 1840.

CHAPTER XV.

1837—40.

SOME beneficent legislation took place during this period, three instances of which were of such strong popular interest as to require notice in some detail.

Criminal Law Commission.

Up to this time, the Criminal Law of the country had not been accessible to those who lived under that law; and it was no easy matter for professional men to attain any competent knowledge of it. The Criminal Law of England was contained in an immense and confused mass of documents;—statutes, ancient and modern records, reported decisions of the judges, and text books. If the mind of every individual lawyer was required to deduce the law from all these repositories, it was clear that the vast work would not really be done; and if the profession proceeded on tradition or in conventional agreement with regard to the most commonly occurring cases, it does not appear that the deposited law was of much practical use. It ill befitted a civilized state and an enlightened age that the criminal law should not be clearly ascertained, and laid down in some depository accessible to all. This great work was appointed, in 1833, to a royal commission, whose business it was to inquire how far it might be expedient to reduce the whole criminal law of the country, written and unwritten, into one digest; and to report on the best manner of doing it. In 1834, the Commissioners reported in favour of the object; and they forthwith proceeded with the work. One of the immediate results of the labours of the Commissioners was the Bill passed in 1836 for allowing the assistance of counsel to prisoners in criminal cases. In 1837, a far more important amelioration was achieved.

Political Dictionary, i. p. 700.

Restriction of the Punishment of Death.

For some years past, public opinion had tended more and more towards the abolition of the punishment of death. From the time when Sir Samuel Romilly began his disclosures of the effects of severity of punishment, there had been a growing conviction that severity of punishment tends to the increase of crime. Whatever other objections to the punishment of death might exist—some denying the right to take away human life at all—some denouncing the cruelty of cutting off a man at the moment of his being laden with crime—others pointing to the cases of innocent persons who had been hanged—the broad ground of the impolicy of the penalty lay open to its opponents of every class. It had been found, as often as tried, that the average of particular crimes lessened after the remission of the death-penalty, while the number of convictions increased largely in proportion. Prosecutors and juries would do their duty to society, when that duty no longer required of them what they considered the murder of the individual culprit. Justice became more certain; and with certainty in the administration of justice comes invariably decrease of crime. Those who knew these things had arrived at advocating a total abolition of the punishment of death; and the facts and

1837—40. figures they exhibited certainly appeared to leave no doubt as to the past operation of the principle of leniency, and no reasonable ground for question of its having the same effect in the future. The Government and the Criminal Law Commissioners, who were not prepared for such a change as society at large now seemed to desire, pleaded that there might be a danger of revulsion to a vindictive system, if, by any accident, grave crimes should increase soon after the abolition of the death-penalty—a plea which might as well have been urged against any remission whatever, and which took for granted the almost impossible supposition that society can go back to a barbarous system, after having achieved emancipation from it. Lord John Russell, especially, fell into his usual apprehension of "going too fast," in his usual forgetfulness that it is impossible to go too fast towards any object, unless there is some reason for going slower.—It is probable, however, that there were unavowed reasons for going slower. It is probable that those reasons lay in the difficulty of knowing what to do with the criminals now cleared off by the halter. Our system of secondary punishments is so imperfect—our methods are so desultory and vacillating, and our failures have been of such serious import, that any government might feel perplexed about the disposal of a new and more desperate class of felons which would be brought under its care by the abolition of the punishment of death. If they had ventured to state this as their difficulty, instead of bringing forward pleas which every body saw to be untenable, the enemies of death-punishment would have perceived at once that the direct way to their object was by taking in hand the subject of secondary punishments. But such an avowal—that men must be hanged because we did not know what else to do with them—could not be made by any government—either in decency, or because no man could be hanged after such an avowal. So the Commissioners and the Government contented themselves with giving reasons which nobody believed in for limiting instead of abolishing the punishment of death. It is possible that they might have remitted more, or the whole, if they had been as well aware as every government ought to be of the state of public opinion and feeling on a matter of which every man and every woman was capable of judging.

There can be no doubt that the courage and enterprise of the Ministers and the Commissioners were much stimulated by the exertions of Mr. Ewart in Parliament, and of many sensible men and able lawyers elsewhere, to concentrate the prevalent feeling and opinion against death-punishment altogether; or in all cases but murder. In 1837, the Commissioners recommended the remission of the death-penalty in twenty-one out of thirty-one cases in which the liability had hitherto existed. They thought this extremely bold—feared they were going faster and further than Government would approve—and did not know what Lord John Russell would think of so sweeping a change. Lord John Russell thought it bold, but enjoyed the prospect of throwing so great a boon into the lap of the nation and its representatives. On the morning of the day of debate, one of the Commissioners went to prepare Lord John Russell for the occasion, by putting him in possession of the knowledge and the proposals of the Commissioners. A friend begged him to tell the Minister that some people thought the House and the nation more ready than he was aware of for the abolition of the death-penalty, and that he must not be surprised if he found it so. From the Minister's surprise at the result of that night's debate, it was clear that he had had no warning.

Hansard, xxxvii. 733.

On the 23rd of March, Lord John Russell had asked leave to bring in a Bill—the first of the series which was to reduce the number of capital offences. On the 19th of May, the Order of the Day for the necessary Committee was read. The Ministerial proposition was to remit the death-penalty in 21 cases; and to restrict it considerably in some of the 10 which remained. Mr. Ewart moved an amendment, confining the penalty of death to the one case of deliberate murder—scarcely disguising, in Lord John Russell's opinion, his object of obtaining an abolition of the punishment as soon after as possible. The Minister declared himself extremely surprised at the turn the debate had taken before the division. Instead of rejoicing in the great boon which he was offering, and which he had supposed might be thought too daring, the House treated him as if he had been proposing to make the law more instead of less stringent. The Ministerial adherents took the alarm; and it was understood that the Whig whipper-in strained every nerve to rally members for a division which they had concluded to be perfectly safe without them. The result of these exertions was a Ministerial majority of 1.—The Bills passed the Lords on the 14th of July, Lord Brougham observing that nothing but the pressure of time prevented his endeavouring to amend these measures, by making the remission of the death-penalty extend to all crimes, except that of murder; and he did not know that he should venture to except that—so convinced was he that capital punishment tended to the increase of crime and the impairing of justice.

Hansard, xxxviii. 912.

Hansard, xxxviii. 922.

Hansard, xxxviii. 1907.

The Criminal Law Commission continued its labours till 1845, when it expired; but revived, with an addition to its numbers, for the further prosecution of its objects. The Commissioners had then presented eight Reports—of high value. Besides the subjects already mentioned, they reported on the treatment of juvenile offenders, and upon the consolidation of the general statute law. Their digest of our Criminal Law, entitled "The Act of Crimes and Punishments," is considered to have fulfilled the purpose of their appointment, and to be a national benefit too great to be fully appreciated but through lapse of time. The new Commission of 1845, which included the members of the former one, was appointed for the revision of this Act of Crimes and Punishments, in preparation for its being made the law of the land. A subsequent Report, by the members of the old Commission, on the law of procedure as regards indictable offences, was likewise given to the new Commission for revision, in the hope of its also becoming law. These preparations for rendering the Criminal Law of England clear, intelligible, and accessible in its statement to all, and the prosecution of offences simple, direct, and certain, are an honourable sign of the times, and a credit to the administration of the period.

RESULTS OF THE COMMISSION.

Political Dictionary, ii. 220.

INFANTS' CUSTODY BILL.

The session of 1839 was a memorable one to at least half the nation for yielding the first act of what must become a course of legislation on behalf of the rights of women, who are in so many ways oppressed by the laws of England that Lord Brougham's objection to the measure was based on his fear to touch a mass of laws so cruel and indefensible as that all must come down if any part were brought into question. The object now was to obtain for mothers of irreproachable conduct who should be separated from their husbands, access to their young children by petition to the Judges, in whose power it was to regulate the terms of that access. When this was clearly stated in the House in 1838—when it was declared that by the law of England a husband of the most profligate character had the power of preventing his virtuous wife from ever seeing her children—that it was on behalf only of mothers irreproachable in the eye of the law that access to their children was asked for—and that this access was to be obtained only by permission of the Equity Judges,—the object sought appeared so mere a fraction of what was due to domestic claims, so small a restitution of natural rights profusely stolen by a barbarous law, that the Bill—called the Custody of Infants' Bill—was passed by the Commons rapidly, and by large majorities. In the Lords, however, there was opposition; and Lord Brougham recorded his views in a speech which ought to be preserved as a specimen of the morality professed in high places in the 19th century. In Hansard, the speech stands entire, for the use of future historians, and the amazement of future moralists. What we have to do with here is the statement of the spirit and structure of the Marriage law as regards the rights of the wife, at the date of the controversy about the Custody of the children.

Hansard, xliv. 779—788.

Lord Brougham on the Position of Wives.

"He was ready to admit—that the law was harsh and cruel in its operation on those cases which had been stated; and also that their small number was no guarantee that many more did not exist which had never seen the light. His noble friend had stated the evils of the present state of the law; he had shown how unjust the law was with regard to the treatment and the custody of the offspring of the wife by her husband; he had shown how it had operated harshly on the wife; and he had pointed out instances in which that law might have entailed evil on the children; and then he contended that his Bill must be accepted as a remedy, because it would be a less evil than the evils pointed out. But there were many evils which the Bill did not profess to remedy. Could any thing be more harsh or cruel than that the wife's goods and chattels should be at the mercy of the husband, and that she might work and labour, and toil for an unkind father to support his family and children, while the husband repaid her with harshness and brutality, he all the time rioting and revelling in extravagance and dissipation, and squandering in the company of guilty paramours the produce of her industry? The law was silent to the complaints of such a woman; or, if not silent, all it said was that in the sweat of her brow she should eat her bread: and not only so; but that in the sweat of her brow her husband should eat his bread, and spend the produce of her industry in insulting her by lavishing her property on his paramours. He knew that there were anomalies and a thousand contradictions in the Marriage law; but the existence of those anomalies and contradictions should operate as so many warnings against the introduction of new anomalies and changes in that Marriage law. . . . . . In that action" (an action for damages against an alleged paramour) "the character of a woman was sworn away. Instances were known in which by collusion between the husband and a pretended paramour, the character of the wife had been destroyed. All this could take place, and yet the wife had no defence. She was excluded from Westminster Hall; and, behind her back, by the principles of our jurisprudence, her character was tried between the husband and the man called her paramour. But what was the case when the man was the guilty party? What legislation was there in favour of the wife? Was it just that in her sufferings she should have no remedy, no sufficient remedy; but rather be left to the mockery and insult of her husband? The husband might pursue his course: he might refuse to live with his wife, unless she went to Doctors' Commons, and demanded a restitution of conjugal rights, which no woman of delicacy could well do. A wife had the greatest difficulty to obtain a separation in the case of adultery. There had been two cases only before that House in which such relief had been granted; the one being a case in which incest had been proved. The present state of the law was such as to bring out a passive resistance on the part of the sex, which felt that they were not properly represented in the legislature. Having shown that the law was not more oppressive to the wife in this than in other cases, he now came to consider whether the remedy proposed for the alleged evil was appropriate."

Lord Brougham's conclusion was adverse to the Bill: but that was of little moment in view of the service he rendered to the oppressed by his exposure of the position of married women in England. As he said, "they were not properly represented in the legislature." They were not represented at all. The party supposed, in works of political philosophy, to represent them are precisely those against whom legislation is needed for their protection. In the case before us, it was, as was openly declared at the time, precisely the men who despised and distrusted women, and had no conception of such an ideal as the virtuous matronage of England, who exerted themselves to prevent the passage of the law which should permit a blameless mother occasionally to see her children, by an order from the Equity Judges. On that night, when Lord Brougham made his remarkable speech, the division was as remarkable as any thing that took place. Two tales were told in the course of the debates on the Bill which melted the hearts of those who heard them. This was one source of interest. Another was the dread on the part of certain peers that this Bill would grant too much liberty to Englishwomen, and that they would be encouraged to elope, if they had hope of any laws being made in their favour—though it was only women who had not eloped who were the objects of this Bill. The result was, in the words of Hansard, "The House divided: content 9: not content 11: majority 2. Bill thrown out." There follows, however, a sensible Protest against this rejection of the Bill, signed by Lords Holland and Lyndhurst and the Duke of Sutherland.

Hansard, xliv. 791.

Division in the Lords.

The question was sure to come on again. When the position of mothers had once been argued, the nation which had sent out Protectors of slaves, and which was striving to put an end to one-sided and tyrannical legislation in Jamaica, was not likely to neglect the suffering women at home whom tyranny had bereaved of their children. In the next session the Bill was passed.

Bill of 1839.

There were circumstances connected with the final effort which can never be forgotten by the lawyers who prepared the Bill, the members of parliament who supported it, or any women who heard of them; for all the women of Great Britain were insulted by the methods pursued to defeat the Bill. The case stands out clear from the Law Magazines and the reviews of the time.

1837—40.

Hansard, xlviii. 1005.

Hansard, xlix. 492.

Hansard, xlix. 493.

First, attacks were made on the motives and characters of the originators and promoters of the Bill; and this was made less difficult and more unmanly by the fact being well known that it was at the instance of a bereaved mother that redress was sought; as it is always at the instance of sufferers that remedial legislation is achieved. Next, an article appeared in the British and Foreign Quarterly Review, which was intended to operate against the Bill, but which probably wrought the other way. This article proceeded on the supposition that all women are bent on mischief; and that the only way to manage them is to place them under the absolute despotism of their husbands. In the course of the argument or exposition, several of the most eminent ladies in Great Britain were insulted by name, and every woman in the world by implication. This article, or the substance of it, was reprinted in pamphlet form; and a copy of it was put into the hands of the peers as they entered the House, by Lord Wynford, the chief agitator against the Bill. It did not answer its purpose with those peers who really knew any thing of the matronage of England. The Bill was read a first time in the Commons on the 30th of May, and the last time on the 28th of June. The will of the Commons had been sufficiently shown the year before. When the second reading in the Lords took place, Lord Wynford observed: "His noble and learned friend had truly said that the custody of the children belonged by law to the father. That was a wise law, for the father was responsible for the rearing up of the children; but when unhappy differences separated the father and mother, to give the custody of the child to the father, and to allow access to it by the mother, was to injure the child; for it was natural to expect that the mother would not instil into the child any respect for the husband whom she might hate or despise. The effects of such a system would be most mischievous to the child, and would prevent its being properly brought up." Lord Wynford did not go on to say whether he thought it would be good for the child, in the custody of a profligate father, to hear that father's way of speaking of the irreproachable mother;—a way of speaking determined by the old rule that men hate those whom they have injured.—Lord Denman thought that "some alteration, and that of a sweeping character, was absolutely necessary to the due administration of justice, and for the prevention of the frightful injuries to society which the present system gave birth to. . . . . In the case of 'The King *v.* Greenhill,' which had been decided in 1836, before himself and the rest of the judges of the Court of King's Bench, he believed that there was not one judge who had not felt ashamed of the state of the law; and that it was such as to render it odious in the eyes of the country. The effect in that case was to enable the father to take his children from his young and blameless wife, and place them in the charge of a woman with whom he then cohabited. The present law was cruel to the wife, debasing to the husband, and dangerous, and probably ruinous, to the health and morals of the children, who could not have any such sure guarantee against corruption, under the tutelage of a profligate father, as the occasional care of a mother." Lord Denman emphatically warned the Lords of the grave responsibility they would incur, both as regarded the morals of society, and their relation to the other House of parliament, if they threw out this Bill, sent up now for the third time by such large majorities of the Commons. Lord Wynford's postponing amendment was negatived without a division; the Bill was read a third time on the 2d, and received the Royal Assent on the 17th, of August. If the Queen understood the full significance of this Bill, as the first blow struck at the oppression of English legislation in relation to women, it must have been with singular pleasure that she made the Bill law.

Its Passage.
Hansard, l. 369.

Another piece of beneficent legislation of this period was highly conservative of the domestic purity and happiness of Great Britain.

Post-Office System.

Mr. Rowland Hill, when a young man, was walking through the Lake district, when he one day saw the postman deliver a letter to a woman at a cottage door. The woman turned it over and examined it, and then returned it, saying that she could not pay the postage, which was a shilling. Hearing that the letter was from her brother, Mr. Hill paid the postage, in spite of the manifest unwillingness of the woman. As soon as the postman was out of sight, she showed Mr. Hill how his money had been wasted, as far as she was concerned. The sheet was blank. There was an agreement between her brother and herself, that as long as all went well with him, he should send a blank sheet in this way once a quarter; and she thus had tidings of him without expense of postage. Most people would have remembered this incident as a curious story to tell: but Mr. Hill's was a mind which wakened up at once to a sense of the significance of the fact. There must be something wrong in a system which drove a brother and sister to cheating, in order to gratify their desire to hear of one another's welfare. It was easy enough in those days for any one whose attention was turned towards the subject, to collect a mass of anecdotes of such cheating. Parents and children, brothers and sisters, lovers and friends, must have tidings of each other, where there is any possibility of obtaining them; and those who had not shillings to spend in postage—who could no more spend shillings in postage than the class above them could spend hundreds of pounds on pictures—would resort to any device of communication, without thinking there was any harm in such cheating, because no money was kept back from government which could have been paid. There was curious dotting in newspapers, by which messages might be spelled out. Newspapers being franked by writing on the covers the names of members of parliament, a set of signals was arranged, by which the names selected were made to serve as a bulletin. Men of business so wrote letters as that several might go on one sheet, which was to be cut up and distributed. The smuggling of letters by carriers was enormous. After all expenditure of time and ingenuity, there remained, however, a terrible blank of enforced silence. We look back now with a sort of amazed compassion to the old crusading times, when warrior-husbands and their wives, grey-headed parents and their brave sons, parted with the knowledge that it must be months or years before they could hear even of one another's existence. We wonder how they bore the depth of silence. And we feel the same now about the families of Polar voyagers. But, till a dozen years ago, it did not occur to many of us how like this was the fate of the largest classes in our own country. The fact is, there was no full and free epistolary intercourse in the country, except between those who had the command of franks. There were few families in the wide middle class who did not feel the cost of postage a heavy item in their expenditure; and if the young people sent letters home only once a fortnight,

Domestic Operation.

1837—40. the amount at the year's end was a rather serious matter. But it was the vast multitude of the lower orders who suffered like the crusading families of old, and the geographical discoverers of all time. When once their families parted off from home, it was a separation almost like that of death. The hundreds of thousands of apprentices, of shopmen, of governesses, of domestic servants, were cut off from family relations as if seas or deserts lay between them and home. If the shilling for each letter could be saved by the economy of weeks or months at first, the rarity of the correspondence went to increase the rarity: new interests hastened the dying out of old ones; and the ancient domestic affections were but too apt to wither away, till the wish for intercourse was gone. The young girl could not ease her heart by pouring out her cares and difficulties to her mother before she slept, as she can now, when the penny and the sheet of paper are the only condition of the correspondence. The young lad felt that a letter home was a somewhat serious and formal matter, when it must cost his parents more than any indulgence they ever thought of for themselves; and the old fun and light-heartedness were dropped from such domestic intercourse as there was. The effect upon morals of this kind of restraint is proved beyond a doubt by the evidence afforded in the army. It was a well-known fact, that in regiments where the commanding officer was kind and courteous about franking letters for the privates, and encouraged them to write as often as they pleased, the soldiers were more sober and manly, more virtuous and domestic in their affections, than where difficulty was made by the indolence or stiffness of the franking officer. To some persons, this aspect has ever appeared the most important of the various interesting aspects of the postage reform achieved by Mr. Rowland Hill. As for others, it is impossible to estimate the advantages of the change. In reading Cowper's Life, how strange now seems his expenditure of time, thought, and trouble, about obtaining franks for the MS. and proofs of his Homer;—now, when every mail carries packets between authors, printers, and publishers, for a few pence, without any teazing solicitation for franks, or dependence upon any body's good offices! What a mass of tradesmen's patterns and samples, of trade circulars, of bills and small sums of money, of music and books, of seeds and flowers, of small merchandize and friendly gifts, of curious specimens passing between men of science, of bulletins of health to satisfy anxious hearts, is every day sent abroad over the land—and now spreading over wide oceans and across continents, through Rowland Hill's discovery of a way to throw down the old barriers, and break through the ancient silence! It was truly a beneficent legislation which made this change.

Other Effects

It was not easy, however, to make the change. Long after the case was rendered clear—long after the old evils and the new possibility were made as evident as facts and figures can make any proposition—there was difficulty—vexatious, even exasperating difficulty—in carrying the reform. One great obstacle at the outset was, that the Post Office has, through all time, declared itself perfect. As the Duke of Wellington declared of our representative system, that it could not be improved, while the grass and trees of Old Sarum were sending two members to parliament, so the Post Office declared itself perfect when carts and saddle-horses carried its bags; and again, when Mr. Palmer's mail-coaches (declared an impossible creation in 1797) brought the Bath letters to London in eighteen hours, and could take no notice of out-of-the-way towns and small villages; and again, when a letter from Uxbridge, posted on Friday night, could not reach Gravesend till Tuesday morning; and finally, when the state of postal communication in Great Britain was what has been indicated above. No postal reforms of a comprehensive character have ever originated in the Post Office itself. This is natural; because its officers are wholly occupied with its interior affairs, and cannot look abroad so as to compare its provisions with the growing needs of society. It required a pedestrian traveller in the Lake district, making his way-side observations—an investigator who could ascertain something of the extent of smuggling of letters—a man of an open heart, who could enter into family sympathies—a man of philosophical ingenuity, who could devise a remedial scheme—and a man of business, who could fortify such a scheme with an impregnable accuracy—to achieve such a reform. The man was among us, and the thing is done.

ROWLAND HILL.

Mr. Hill ascertained that "the cost of mere transit incurred upon a letter sent from London to Edinburgh, a distance of 400 miles, is not more than one thirty-sixth part of a penny." When this was once made clearly known to the people of London and Edinburgh, it was not likely that they would be long content to pay a shilling or upwards. It was not likely that rich merchants would be content; and much less the multitude to whom a shilling was a prohibitory duty on correspondence. It would strike them all that if government received such a profit as this on the transmission of letters, the government must be getting much too rich at the expense of letter-writers, and to the injury of persons who would fain write letters if they could. If it appeared, however, that the revenue from the Post Office was unaccountably small—that it was diminishing in actual amount, instead of increasing with the spread of population—it was clear that the Post Office could not be so perfect as it thought itself—that it was not answering its purpose—that, whatever might be its mismanagement, and consequent expensiveness, there must also be an enormous amount of smuggling of letters. And the facts were so. Between the years 1815 and 1835, the Post Office annual revenue had declined; while, on its own existing terms, it ought, from the increase of population, to have risen £507,700:—from the mere increase of population it ought to have risen thus much, without regard to the improvement of education, and the spread of commerce, which had taken place in those twenty years.

HIS FACTS.

Post-Office Reform, p. 14, (3d edit.)

Post-Office Reform, p. 2.

The way to deal with smuggling is now very well understood. To extinguish smuggling, it is necessary to lower duties to the point which makes smuggling not worth while. In some of the most populous districts of England, it was believed that the number of letters illegally conveyed by carriers, and delivered in an awkward and irregular sort of way at the cost of a penny each, far exceeded that of the letters sent through the Post Office. The penny posts established in towns were found to answer well. Putting together these and a hundred other facts with that of the actual cost of transmission of an Edinburgh letter, Mr. Hill proposed to reduce the cost of all letters not exceeding half an ounce in weight to a penny. The shock to the Post Office of such an audacious proposal was extreme; and so was the amazement of the public at the opening of such a prospect. As the actual cost of transmission to any part of the kingdom reached by the mail was less than a

HIS PROPOSAL.

1837—40.

farthing, the penny rate might be made uniform—to the saving of a world of time and trouble—and still the profit or tax would be 200 per cent. Mr. Hill's calculation was, that if the postage could be paid in advance, so as to save time and labour in delivery, and other facilities of communication be established, which he pointed out, and the postage be reduced to a penny for half-ounce letters, the increase in the number of letters, by the stoppage of smuggling and the new cheapness, must soon be four-fold. When it became four-fold, the net revenue, after defraying the expense of conveying franks and newspapers, would amount to £1,278,000 per annum: a sum only £280,000 less than the existing revenue. As no one supposed that the increase would ultimately be so little as four-fold, there was every prospect that the Post Office revenue would, in a few years, recover its then present amount directly; while it was certain that, under other heads, the revenue must be largely increased through the stimulus given to commerce by improved communication. Lord Lowther, the Post-Master-General, had already proposed the cheap transmission of prices current, as important to the interests of trade: and if the same advantage could be extended to all papers connected with commerce, there was no saying how great would be the stimulus communicated to business of every kind. When Mr. Hill proposed his plan, the revenue was in a flourishing state; in a state which would justify such an experiment as this for such ends. It is well that none foreknew the reverse which was at hand, and the long depression which must ensue; for none might have had courage to go into the enterprise: but that reverse served admirably as a test of the reform; and through the long depression which ensued, Mr. Hill's plan, though cruelly maimed, and allowed at first no fair chance, worked well while every thing else was working ill. The revenue from the Post Office went on steadily increasing, while every other branch of the national income was declining or stationary.

Post-Office Reform, p. 26.

Some years before this time, Mr. Charles Knight had suggested that the best way of collecting a penny postage on newspapers would be by the use of stamped covers. Mr. Hill now availed himself of this idea, acknowledging its origin. By means of a penny letter stamp, the Post Office might be saved all the trouble of collecting postage, and the delivery be immensely accelerated. If residents in towns would have generally adopted his suggestion of having letter-boxes, with a slit, affixed to the inside of their street-doors, it would have been a further important saving of time—the postman having only to drop the letters into the box, knock at the door, and run on, instead of having to wait for the answer to his knock. This piece of justice to the scheme is not yet practised nearly to the extent that it ought to be: but, notwithstanding this, and many other needless impediments to the transaction of Post Office business, the quantity of work done without increase of the staff is prodigious.

The Movement.

Mr. Hill had to endure something of the bitter disappointment which is the usual portion of great social reformers; but, from the enlightenment of the age, his mortifications were neither so complete nor so durable as those of many benefactors of society. He first proffered his plan privately to the government. Next, he published his first pamphlet on Post Office Reform, when the commercial world became interested at once, and forced the scheme on the indifferent and indolent administration. Mr. Wallace moved, but without avail,

Polit. Dic., ii. 563.

for a select committee of the Commons, to investigate and report upon the plan, in February, 1838; the government declaring, in both Houses, that the matter was under their consideration. Petitions came up to parliament from Chambers of Commerce, the Common Council of London, the merchants and bankers of London, literary societies, and other bodies, which indicated to the Ministers that this was not a matter to be trifled with. They showed their interest in a way which amused their friends and enemies alike—by proposing little schemes, and alterations, and devices of their own, which proved only that they were very courageous in one direction, if not in another. They feared endangering the revenue; but they did not fear to place themselves and their little notions side by side with the man and the scheme in whom and in which the nation placed confidence. Neither they nor the administration who succeeded them, could see that the plan was a grand whole, which demanded to be left entire, and to be worked by him who had devised it; and both cabinets were for pulling it in pieces, themselves, or by permission to the old Post Office to do it—being ready, all the time, to make its author responsible for the disasters that might happen through the very mutilation of the scheme. Mr. Spring Rice won for himself the title of "The Footman's Friend," given by a merry newspaper when he proffered his own little scheme of a new postage which should save flunkies the trouble of carrying ladies' notes. When the special committee was granted, and up to nearly the close of its labours, in August, 1838, the chairman, a government official, and other members of his way of thinking, declared to their friends in the clubs and in drawing-rooms, that the present agitation would probably induce a considerable reduction of the rate of postage; but, as to the adoption of Mr. Hill's plan, it was the most absurd idea that any one could entertain;—too absurd to be worth a reply. Some of these gentlemen continued to say the same thing till within six weeks of the introduction of Mr. Hill's measure into the House of Commons by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, on July 5, 1839. The evidence obtained in committee was irresistible: the demand of a trial of the plan by the commercial world and the general public was irresistible: the pressure of reason and will together was irresistible; and the plan was affirmed by a majority of 102 in the Commons, and made law on the 17th of August following.

Hansard, xxxviii. 1099; xl. 901.

Hansard, xlviii. 1365.

Hansard, xlix. 301.
Hansard, l. 369.

THE REFORM MADE LAW.

INTERMEDIATE METHOD.

REAL SCHEME TRIED.

For a few weeks, a uniform four-penny rate was charged, that the Post Office might not be overwhelmed at once by a deluge of penny letters, before its officials had become accustomed to the new method of charging by weight: but on the 10th of January, 1840, the real scheme was tried. The inland rate was now a penny for every pre-paid packet not exceeding $\frac{1}{2}$ oz. in weight, and 2*d.* for every such packet not paid in advance: double the rate for packets above $\frac{1}{2}$ oz. and under 1 oz.; and 2*d.* more if pre-paid, 4*d.* if unpaid, for every oz. or fraction of an oz. beyond. There was much amusing excitement every where about putting the plan into practice—some (but not enough) affixing of letter-boxes to house-doors—some mistakes, such as forgetting to pre-pay (at which correspondents were wrathful)—or slipping a letter and a penny together into the box at the post office—a great stimulus to the manufacture of frank weights, and a great fertility of invention about envelopes, stamps, paper that could not be imitated, and gums that were warranted harmless and seemly. Mulready furnished a design for an envelope which had much merit—but two great defects:—it did not leave space for a long address, or one made long by the scrawling of the illiterate; and it rendered stale some signs of emotion which should never be made irreverently familiar—as the uplifted hands and eyes of the widowed mother who is receiving a letter from an absent son. That envelope was soon laid aside, and the more convenient stamp introduced, of the Queen's head in one corner. When this stamp became procurable either separately or on the envelope, and when its being on a blue ground came to denote its being a 2*d.* stamp, the machinery of convenience was at length complete to the public, as far as letters were concerned. The stamps came into use on the 6th of May. Franking entirely ceased on the day when the penny rate was introduced; and the people were amused with the idea that the Queen herself was paying postage. This abolition of the franking privilege was declared by those who had previously been free from postage charges to be more felt by them than they could have supposed possible. They found their postage expenditure to be mounting up to many pounds in the year; and a multitude of them who had not before considered the matter now saw how right it was that the aristocracy should pay their share towards a tax which had hitherto never touched them, while it bore hardly upon the poorest in the land who could read and write.

IMMEDIATE RESULTS.

The results of the plan after a year's adoption were as encouraging as could be at all expected under the unfavourable circumstances of commercial distress and of the plan being tried by halves. The reduction of postage was tried, without the accompanying condition of improved facilities in the transmission and delivery of letters; and large expenses were incurred which had nothing to do with the new plan, but which went into the general account of the Post Office. The increase in the number of chargeable letters was two and a half fold; and these yielded more than half the former gross revenue of the Post Office: the increase of expense in connexion with the plan was about £44,000: and the actual net revenue was £465,000—a falling-off of nearly three-fourths from the former net revenue. Mr. Hill had predicted a state of things somewhat less favourable than this as the result of the first year's experiment, under these particular heads: but he had hoped that the profitable parts of his plan would have been tried, as well as those which must bring present loss. Those who understood the matter, however, had now no further doubt of ultimate success, even in regard to the pecuniary returns of the Post Office, while the increased facilities for business, for the promotion of science and the arts, and for family intercourse, were felt and acknowledged in the remotest corners of the British islands. As Mr. Hill had himself the pleasure of knowing, "the postman had now to make long rounds through humble districts where, heretofore, his knock was seldom heard." As for the number of letters sent by post, it appears to have been at this time more than double what it was before the reduction of postage. There was reason to suppose that, if the plan was fairly tried, five years would suffice to restore the gross revenue of the Post Office, while the advantages to other branches of the revenue would be meantime perpetually on the increase. The proportion of pre-paid letters was continually on the increase as people learned to manage their own share of the plan; and this incessantly diminished the labour of the Post Office. The transmission of small sums of money by post office orders

Results of the New Postage, p. 13.

Results, &c. p. 7.

was becoming more and more common, not only aiding the transaction of business, but carrying comfort into thousands of humble homes. The stamps themselves became a convenient form of small currency. The illicit conveyance of letters ceased at once, when the Post Office became the cheapest means of conveyance. Thus the prospect was cheering in every way but one. The one drawback was that the plan was not fairly worked. The Post Office authorities were hostile to the change; and neither the existing government nor that which succeeded it supported Mr. Hill. Even while he was engaged under the Melbourne Ministry, to superintend the working of his own plan, it was adopted only by halves: and immediately on the succession of the Peel administration, he was dismissed, and the scheme left, as far as the public would allow it, to the mercy of the hostile post-office authorities.

Further Results.

At the end of three years, no part of Mr. Hill's plan had been fully tried but that of the reduction of postage. Little was done towards the simplification of arrangements or the introduction of economy: and almost nothing in regard to increased speed in the delivery, or facility for the despatch, of letters. The times were fearfully bad; yet, according to a return made to the House of Lords, the results were that the gross revenue had reached two-thirds of its old amount; and that the net revenue of the Post Office was increasing from year to year, while every other branch of revenue was decreasing. But Mr. Hill was only for a time cast out and discouraged. All parties became convinced at last, as the public at large were throughout, that he was essential to the working of his own plan; and he was solicited to return to his task of superintendence in the Post Office. Since that time, various reforms and beneficial arrangements have been introduced; and even his ultimate scheme of a parcel-post is in partial operation. In time, the nation will have the whole.

Mr. Hill's Petition to the Commons, April 4th, 1843.

Meanwhile it hardly needs to be pointed out, that though the fiscal results of the plan are those which must be first considered by parliament and other branches of the government, they are not those which are most important to the nation at large. It is all very well that the revenue should rise to what it was before, and that increase should be perceptible in other branches of the revenue from the stimulus of aid afforded to commerce: but the nation is far more deeply interested in the operation of the scheme on the promotion of science, on the daily convenience to millions of persons, and especially on the domestic morals of the people. The blessings which have thus accrued are too vast for estimate. It is believed most firmly by those who know best—by those whose walk is among the great middle and greater lower classes of society—that no one has done so much as Mr. Rowland Hill in our time in drawing closer the domestic ties of the nation, and extending the influences of home over the wide-spreading, stirring, and most diverse interests of social life in our own country. And from our own country, the blessing is reaching many more; and cheap postage is becoming established in one nation after another, extending the benefits of the invention among myriads of men who have not yet heard the name of its author. The neighbourly shilling given in the Lake district was well laid out.

CHAPTER XVI.

1836—41. Privilege of Parliament. ONE of the last subjects of importance discussed in parliament before the Melbourne Ministry went out of power was the Privilege question, the origin of which has been related. On account of some amusing incidents which attended the discussion, and of the intricacy of the question, the press and the public treated the matter with a levity or an indifference which appear much out of place amidst the seriousness of an historical review. The grave truth of the case was that an apparent incompatibility had arisen between the privileges of the Commons and the rights of the subject; and the Court of Queen's Bench and Parliament were directly at issue. The affair had become what is called a dead lock. No one could see how a step could be taken in any direction but into deadly mischief; and yet it was necessary that something should be done.

1836. State of the Case. In November, 1836, Chief-Justice Denman had declared from the Bench his opinion that the authority of the House of Commons could not justify the publication of a libel: whereas the House and its officers maintained that the publisher of their Reports was not subject to action for libel, as he published under the authority of the parliament; and the question of the powers and privileges of parliament could not be brought into discussion or decision before any other court or tribunal than parliament itself, without subjecting the parties concerned to the displeasure and the penalties of parliament for a high breach of its privileges. This was the decision arrived at by the Special Committee which reported on the subject in May, 1837. 1837.

The case now stood thus. Messrs. Hansard, the parliamentary printers, had published certain Reports on Prisons, in one of which a book, published by J. J. Stockdale, was called "obscene and disgusting in the extreme." Stockdale prosecuted the Hansards for a libel. The Hansards pleaded the authority of parliament. The judge, Chief-Justice Denman, declared that parliament could not authorize the publication of libels on individuals. Parliament not only insisted that it could publish what it pleased, but that itself was the sole judge of its own powers and privileges, and that for any person to call them in question in any Court was a high breach of privilege. Both parties supposed themselves engaged in vindicating the liberty of the subject—Lord Denman believing that he was saving individuals from being oppressed by the most powerful body in the realm; and the House of Commons believing that the liberty of the subject was essentially involved in the liberties of the representative and legislative body.

Stockdale continued his prosecution of the Hansards. The Hansards, who put themselves under the protection of the House, were directed to plead. The verdict was given against them, and damages were assessed, which the

House directed the Hansards to pay; because, having pleaded, they could not repudiate the result of the trial.

On the 31st of July, 1839, the Hansards informed the House that they were threatened with a similar action by another person, in relation to another Report. They were this time desired to take no notice, to make no preparations, as the action threatened would be regarded by the House as a breach of its privileges, and punished accordingly. The matter was supposed to be settled by the person said to be aggrieved in the Report declaring that he had never had any intention of prosecuting the printers. But Stockdale was not quiet yet. Before August was out, he brought a third action for the same libel—the sale of every fresh Copy being considered in law a separate publication of the libel. The Hansards were directed by the Speaker to let matters take their course: and they merely served Stockdale with a formal notice of the resolutions of the House of Commons of May, 1837, and August, 1839. The damages were laid at £50,000. As the Hansards would not plead, judgment went against them by default; and a jury in the Sheriff's court assessed the damages at £600.

Hansard, xlix. 1101.

THE SHERIFFS.

The Sheriffs were brought into the affair sorely against their will: and it was their embarrassing predicament which caused the mirth of the newspapers throughout the rest of the transaction. The Sheriffs of London (together constituting one Sheriff of Middlesex) were Messrs. William Evans and John Wheelton. First, they petitioned the Courts to allow time, before the assessing of the damages, that parliament might be in session: but no delay was permitted, and they were obliged to proceed to the assessment on the 12th of November. Stockdale then pressed them on, and they were compelled to seize the printing office, premises, and stock in trade, of the Hansards. On their reporting on the 29th of November that they had done so, Stockdale served them with an order to sell the property, that he might obtain his damages. The Sheriffs were thus placed between two fires of wrath. The House of Commons was pledged to punish them, on the one hand, for daring to meddle with its printer; and the Court of Queen's Bench would punish them, on the other hand, if they refused to levy the money. Either the Speaker would send them to Newgate, or Chief-Justice Denman would send them to the Marshalsea. Again they asked for time; and some delay was granted—until the 19th of December—for making their return. The sale was fixed for the 17th: but, to avoid the scandal and other evils of the spectacle, the money was paid into the Sheriff's court on the night of the 16th. To put off extremities as long as possible, the Sheriffs delayed paying the money to Stockdale. The Court of Queen's Bench granted a rule, calling upon them to show cause, on the 17th of January, why they did not pay the money. Meantime parliament assembled; and on the 16th, Lord J. Russell laid the whole case before the House, and pressed for an immediate decision of this perplexing and dangerous matter.

Annual Register, 1840, p. 20.

Hansard, li. 14, 49.

THE HOUSE.

The House might now either follow its ancient method of asserting its privilege by committing those who had violated it—in which case, it must commit not only Stockdale and his attorney Howard, but the Sheriffs and their officers, and the Chief-Justice and his coadjutors—or it might yield its privileges so far as to let the Hansards plead, and so permit the question of Privilege to

1836—41. come before the Courts—or it might yield another of its privileges, by confining the circulation of its Reports among its own members; or it might now pass a bill to authorize such a publication of their Reports as had been made by Messrs. Hansard. The one thing that was impossible was that the House could allow matters to remain as they were. It had unfortunately vacillated in its course, by authorizing the Hansards to plead in one case, and forbidding them to do so in the next—and now it must repair the mischief of its own vacillation.

The House decided on asserting its privileges. For the sake of decency, or what was called public convenience, it would refrain from calling the Judges to its bar, though it had indubitable power to do so. It would endeavour to stop the assaults upon its privileges by laying hold of the inferior officers who were acting in contempt. The Sheriffs were therefore, as it was decided by a large majority, to appear at the bar of the House, bringing with them all the documents and authorities under which they had acted. Hansard, li. 101.

On the next night, January 17th, it was decided that Stockdale should be committed under the Speaker's warrant, for breach of privilege. Hansard, li. 190. On the 18th, the Sheriffs were brought up to the bar of the House. The Sheriffs at the Bar. They admitted that the money was still in their agent's hands. Hansard, li. 204. They were ordered to attend again on Monday the 20th. By that day it became known that the Court of Queen's Bench would the next morning be moved to compel the Sheriffs to pay the money to Stockdale: and the House must therefore act vigorously this night. It decided to order the Sheriffs to refund the money. The Sheriffs were summoned to the bar, and appeared in their scarlet robes, when the Speaker informed them of the order of the House that they should refund the money, and invited them to speak, if they had any thing to say. They bowed in silence and withdrew. Hansard, li. 344. Lord J. Russell then moved the commitment of the Sheriffs for contempt: but the subject was left over to the next day, when two petitions were presented from the Sheriffs, praying that they might not be punished for endeavouring to do their duty under the orders of the Court of Queen's Bench. Hansard, li. 359. Their petitions were not received, and they were committed to the custody of the Sergeant-at-arms. The Sheriffs in Custody. Stockdale's attorney, Howard, was called in; and, as he expressed sorrow at having offended the House, he was merely reprimanded and discharged.

Three days afterwards, the Sergeant-at-arms came to the bar of the House to know what he was to do. He had been served with a writ of Habeas Corpus from the Court of Queen's Bench commanding him to produce the Sheriffs in that Court. Hansard, li. 549. The Court of Queen's Bench. The House directed him to inform the Court that he held them in custody for breach of the privileges of the House. He took them to the Court accordingly, to make this declaration. It was a remarkable scene; and one which would not safely bear a repetition. As the Sheriffs in their robes passed along in custody, from their apartments under the House to the Court, they were loudly cheered; and the lawyers in the Court made no secret of their sympathy being with the prisoners. Every body, of all parties, pitied them as victims in a quarrel about which it was no business of theirs to decide. The Court declared the reasons of the Sergeant-at-arms to be good and sufficient; and he took away his prisoners as he had brought them.

On the same day, the 25th of January, Stockdale, though in prison, commenced a new action against the Hansards, his agent being the same Howard who had just expressed his sorrow for having offended the House. Howard was ordered up again, on the 27th, when the affair was next discussed: but Howard was not to be found. A warrant for his arrest was issued on the 4th of February; and on the 6th he was brought up in custody, and committed to Newgate. The House had now two sets of prisoners in different places of confinement: and nobody could conceive what was to be done with them, or how any end of this embarrassing matter was to be reached. The House was so unpopular that it was clear that the general public did not at all comprehend the nature and extent of the dispute. By some, Lord Denman was regarded as an audacious judge, setting up his judgment and his Court against the mighty popular body of the Commons; while by others, he was lauded as a defender of the rights of the subject against an overbearing parliament. Every body pitied the Sheriffs, and every body quizzed them. The print-shops were full of caricatures of them—sitting in their well-warmed apartment, with a smoking dinner on the table, or in court dresses with a circle of admiring sympathizers pressing consolation upon them. Meantime, here, on the 7th of February, were matters as before at a dead lock.

Sir R. Peel said that the time was now come for the Ministers to propose some comprehensive course for extricating the House from its difficulty. Hansard, lii. 67. Lord J. Russell was responsible for the peace of the country: and if he could say that he hoped to pass a Bill which should make the powers of the House certain and complete, he would undoubtedly have the support of the House. On being called to a division, the members decided not to release the Sheriffs. Hansard, lii. 69. On the 12th, however, it was certified by the medical attendant of one of the Sheriffs, Mr. Wheelton, that his patient's life would be endangered by a longer confinement; and Mr. Wheelton was released, without payment of his fees. Release of Sheriff Wheelton. Hansard, lii. 156. An attempt to procure Mr. Evans's discharge, on a plea of health, failed, two days, and again a fortnight, afterwards. Then, on the 17th of February, there was notice of a fifth action of Stockdale against the Hansards; and the House passed a vote of censure and threat. There were more arrests; and the odium excited by these proceedings, while no progress was apparently made towards a conclusion, was so great that the affair was now truly an alarming one. Hansard, lii. 320. Critical State of the Case. The time of the House was occupied, night after night, to the injury of public business: placards met the eye on the walls of London at every turn, all denouncing the tyranny of the House: and in the country, the health of the Sheriffs was drunk at public dinners with three times three. Every body could see the tyrannical aspect of the affair, while few understood the supreme importance of the privileges of parliament: and there were not many newspapers wise enough to give the information. By this time, the public were saying, and hoping, that parliament would be beaten at last; and this hastened the action of the House. Sir R. Peel was of opinion that it would be expedient now to resort to enactment, the House reserving to itself the power to act without it if the process of legislation should fail. This was done. Lord J. Russell brought in a Bill on the 5th of March, Hansard, lii. 949. Bill of Enactment. by which it was enacted that the Courts should stay all proceedings against any parliamentary papers, on the production of a certificate signed by either the Lord Chancellor or the Speaker,

1836—41.

that such papers were printed by order of parliament. A clause in this Bill put a stop to the proceedings against the Hansards. The motion to bring in the Bill was carried by a majority of 149 in a House of 257. On the same evening the House decided to discharge Mr. Sheriff Evans, under an injunction to attend the House on the 6th of April.

Hansard, lii. 1026.
Release of Sheriff Evans.

Then the indefatigable Mr. Howard, Stockdale's attorney, instituted a prosecution against the officers of the House, for trespass in entering and searching his dwelling, when they were in search of himself. The Attorney-General was for allowing this action to proceed, as the question turned on the fact whether the officers had exceeded their duty or not. The House agreed with him, by a majority of 91, though the Solicitor-General and other eminent members were in opposition.

Hansard, liii. 288.
Hansard, liii. 294.

In the Upper House, some of the peers, besides Lord Denman, wished so to amend the Bill now sent up to them as to restrict the power of publishing libels, and prevent the House of Commons from being the only authorized libeller in the country: but the majority saw that, if this were to be done, the present was not the moment for doing it. Such a provision, made now, would be a confession of wrong, and a surrender on the part of parliament which neither fact nor policy would allow. The Bill became law on the 14th of April. On the 15th, Mr. Sheriff Evans was released from his obligation to appear, and some of the minor recusants were discharged from custody. But the House refused to release either Howard or Stockdale. On the 14th of May, however, the House agreed, on the motion of Mr. Duncombe, to let them go. And thus the matter was said to be concluded.

Bill becomes law.
Hansard, liii. 1081.
Hansard, liii. 1132
Hansard, liv. 117.
Discharge of Prisoners.
Unsatisfactory Conclusion.

Every one felt that it was not a satisfactory—not a genuine conclusion. The privilege of parliament was not vindicated, nor the Court of Queen's Bench either justified or condemned. The particular case about publishing Reports was doubtfully provided for in the future by a present act of compromise: but nothing was settled about the right of any party to discuss the privilege of parliament before the Courts. Many openings were left for renewals of this painful and undignified kind of controversy: and perhaps the most important result was the warning given of this danger, and the hint to avoid, if possible, by the exercise of careful skill, temper, and knowledge, all occasion of collision between parliament with its privileges and the Courts which protect the liberty of the subject.

1841.
Imbecility of the Administration.

When parliament met for the session of 1841, there was some curiosity to know what the Ministers would do. Weak as they had long been, they were known to be weaker than ever, through some losses which had happened during the recess. They had now so often shown that they could adhere to office under circumstances apparently hopeless—it was so evident that their fixed idea was that it was they who must govern the country, and that they relied on royal favour to the utmost extent to which it could go—that a kind of wonder had grown up whether any thing could dislodge them, short of a dangerous manifestation of popular discontent; and it had become a matter of calculation how that discontent could be manifested in a manner least inconsistent with the public peace. The Ministers themselves were now soon to point out the way.

Queen's Speech.
Hansard, lvi. 1.

The Speech was so framed as to make the Address a matter of safe discussion. It was on domestic subjects that antagonism was most likely to arise; and the Speech was confined to topics of foreign policy. The most prominent subject of the session was the renewal of the powers of the Poor Law Commissioners for five years. After long debates and much wearisome and intricate discussion, the Ministers obtained a majority; but the measure was dropped, with some others of importance, in the prospect of the dissolution of parliament which presently ensued. An alteration in the Declaration taken by municipal officers, intended to open a way for Jews into corporation offices, was carried in the Commons, but thrown out by the Peers. When various measures had been brought forward by various parties, only to be negatived or thrown out, the time was come—the 30th of April—for the Chancellor of the Exchequer to make his financial statement; and this, it was believed, would be the occasion which should decide the fate of the Ministry. It was known that the statement would be a melancholy one; and while the country was speculating on how the government would get over this crowning difficulty, it was entertained—really amused—with one of the Whig surprises, which had by this time failed to do more than amuse or excite contempt—by Lord J. Russell giving notice that on the 31st of May he should move for a Committee of the whole House, to consider the acts of parliament relating to the trade in Corn.

Hansard, lvi. 451.
Hansard, lviii. 708.

Hansard, lviii. 1458.

FINANCE.

Hansard, lvii. 1294.

LAST RESORT.

No stronger indication of desperation could be given than this. The Anti-Corn-Law League was becoming strong, and carrying the people with it exactly in proportion as it spread knowledge of the case among them. This novel policy of the Cabinet was obviously a desperate snatch at a popular interest; a last effort to recover popular support. The social determination to have a free trade in corn was growing in strength from year to year: but the question was too important to be delivered into the charge of the Melbourne Ministry. There was as yet no such pressure from without as would make them earnest, and keep them steady, in the conduct of a reform so important. That the members of the Cabinet should all be true converts already, was wholly incredible; while it was only too credible that they would grasp at any means of popular support which should enable them to remain in office. If they, whose whole pretension was that of being reformers, had not throughout seen the truth in regard to the Corn laws, they saw it now too late for their respectability. A conversion which might have been truly respectable in a Conservative Ministry placed under new lights, was in the highest degree suspicious in a Reform Administration which had been for several years in the illuminated position. The elections were soon to show what the people thought of this demonstration; and meantime the House was in a state of high excitement.

Hansard, lvii. 1295.

THE BUDGET.

Hansard, lvii. 1306.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer had to announce a deficiency of nearly two millions. Mr. Baring went back to Lord Althorp's propositions about the timber and sugar duties, by changes in which he hoped to secure an increase of £1,300,000. For the other £400,000 required, he looked to the result of Lord J. Russell's motion on the Corn laws. The existing deficiency was to be made up by an issue of Exchequer Bills, and a resort to Savings Bank funds. It did not strengthen popular confidence in the Ministry that the revenue was now deficient, year by year: and that, instead of a remedy, loans were resorted to in time of peace. There was a prevalent discontent at Whig

1836—41. management of financial affairs; a prevalent conviction that the Whig Ministry could not manage financial affairs; and a prevalent indignation that they kept in their own hands a business of such transcendent importance which they were incompetent to manage. During the month which was appointed to intervene between the introduction of the Budget and of Lord J. Russell's propositions to alter the Corn laws, there was great agitation in the country. The Ministers hoped, of course, to appropriate the aid of the whole anti-corn-law party, and thus gave them time to organize their support: but there was as much commotion on the other side: a commotion which extended itself into the House of Lords, where the Prime Minister was brought to acknowledge that he had changed his views, declaring that his former opinion was grounded on purely temporary circumstances; a limitation which he had certainly not been aware of when he declared, not long before, that the maddest of all the mad things he had ever heard of was the idea of giving up the Corn laws.—Lord J. Russell found it best not to delay his announcement of the terms of his motion beyond the 7th of May. On that night, he declared his intention of proposing a fixed duty of 8s. per quarter on wheat, of 5s. on rye, of 4s. 6d. on barley, and of 3s. 4d. on oats.

Hansard, lvii. 1375.

Hansard, lviii. 16.

Fixed Corn-duty proposed.

Defeat on the Sugar Duties.

Hansard, lviii. 667.

The debate on the Sugar duties had to be gone through first. It lasted eight nights, and ended in the defeat of Ministers by a majority of 36 in a House of 598. It was universally concluded that now the Ministers would resign; and the House was divided between indignation and amusement when the Chancellor of the Exchequer rose in his place, the next night of meeting, and gave notice, as if nothing unusual had occurred, that on the Monday following, he should move the usual annual sugar duties. Lord J. Russell then moved that the House should adjourn to that Monday. While the Ministers were receiving the taunts of the Opposition amidst the silence of the reformers present, the news spread along the crowded avenues of the House, together with the intimation that the Corn question was to be brought forward on the 4th of June. The policy of the Ministers was now supposed to be to endure any amount of defeat previous to the Corn debate, and then to dissolve the House, in order to throw themselves upon the country as Free-traders, when the agitation should be at its height. The whole country was immediately busy preparing for the elections; and Lord J. Russell indicated this as his reason for dropping the Poor Law Bill, saying that he would not give occasion for speeches in parliament intended for the hustings.—The annual sugar duties were agreed to; Sir R. Peel declaring that the proper opportunity for defeating Ministers was not on that occasion, but in the form of a regular vote of want of confidence. This vote he obtained on the 4th of June, by a majority of one, in a House of 623 members. His resolution was, "That her Majesty's Ministers do not sufficiently possess the confidence of the House of Commons to enable them to carry through the House measures which they deem of essential importance to the public welfare; and that their continuance in office under such circumstances is at variance with the spirit of the Constitution." Lord J. Russell promised to make known on the next Monday the intentions of government: and on that day the avenues to the House were crowded as before.

Hansard, lviii. 676.

Hansard, lviii. 710.

Hansard, lviii. 1241.

Hansard, lviii. 706.

Vote of Want of Confidence.

Hansard, lviii. 1264.

The Ministers, or a majority of them, had agreed that their best course would be to relinquish all discussion of the Corn laws for the present; to take a vote of supply for the exigencies of the public service for some months to come; and then, as they could rely upon no more majorities in that House, to dissolve parliament, and appeal to the country. They had tendered their advice to the Crown to lose no time in dissolving parliament, and summoning a new one, in order to ascertain the opinion of the nation. Hansard, lviii. 1274.

As might be expected, the House emptied rapidly after this explanation; and members dispersed themselves over the country, to manage their elections. It was universally understood that this election was of the last importance. In 1835, Sir R. Peel's fine statesmanship failed, because parties were yet too strong for him—too strong yet from the forces of the Reform movement. His short administration had been of use in proving the increased liberality of his tendencies, and his good faith in purposing to maintain reforms actually and deliberately achieved. Since then, the Whigs had declined in power and repute; and they now held no place at all in popular expectation. It remained to be seen whether the popular choice of future rule would turn towards him or them;—whether it might not appear to the nation at large, as it did to many individual observers, as probable that Sir R. Peel would prove truly a popular leader, as it was now clearly impossible that the Whig ministry should ever be so again.

A small number of members remained in London to complete some necessary legislation; but various measures of importance were dropped.—On the 22nd of June, parliament was prorogued by the Queen in person to the 29th of the same month: and on the 23rd, a royal proclamation declared the parliament dissolved. The writs now issued were made returnable on the 19th of August. Hansard, lviii. 1595.

Dissolution of Parliament.

Such were the circumstances under which the thirteenth parliament was dissolved, after a duration of four sessions, and nearly four years. How the nation would declare its opinions in the choice of the next was felt to be a matter of the deepest interest to the Sovereign, the Ministers, the land-owning Peers, and the suffering people.

CHAPTER XVII.

1835—41.

The Queen.

ONE of the strongest and most genial interests of the period now closing was the young Queen. If the kindliness and open heart of William IV. had been refreshing after the temper and manners of his predecessor, the youthfulness and gaiety of the new Sovereign were now really exhilarating after the spectacle of so many years—of a feeble old man in the royal carriage. At first, the Queen was in high spirits—liking to see and be seen—driving in the parks when they were most thronged; dining at Guildhall; and saying, as she went down to open the parliament, "Let my people see me." There were smiles on her face, and she met nothing but smiles and acclamations.—On that 9th of November, when she went to dine at Guildhall, London did not look like itself, with its gravelled streets, and avenues of green boughs and flags; and the old Hall itself, usually so dingy and dirty, seemed to have grown young for the occasion—brilliant as it was with decorations—with crimson cloth and silk, with flags and banners, and armour glittering among the innumerable lights. Under the magnificent canopy, in the gorgeous chair of state, was seen no portly elderly gentleman, fatigued almost before the festivities had begun; but the slight figure of the young girl, all health and spirits, who half rose and bowed round to her relations—her mother, her uncles, aunts, and cousins—when the health of the royal family was proposed.—There were reviews in the parks, where all London seemed to have poured out to see the Queen, who, as was always said, "looked remarkably well," and enjoyed the greetings of her subjects.—Then there was the Coronation—that bright day when there was not standing-room left for another spectator any where within view of any part of the pageant, and yet no accident of the smallest consequence happened from morning till night:—an early morning and a late night; for the first rays of the Midsummer sun that slanted down through the high windows of Westminster Abbey shone upon the jewels of whole rows of peeresses, and upon scarlet uniforms scattered among court dresses, and church vestments, and splendid female array: and the illuminations of that night were not out when the next sun rose. It was a day of great fatigue and excitement; but all present in the Abbey defied fatigue, for all hoped that this might be the last coronation they might ever have the opportunity of seeing. The Sovereign herself was nearly the youngest person present; and the general hope was that she might live to be as old as any one there. The sensation on her entering was a wonderful moment. Before, a painful sleepiness had oppressed those who had sat so many hours in that strangest of positions—idle, full-dressed, under bright sunshine, in a vast crowd: but the burst of music, rushing among the arches and ringing from the roof, wakened up the senses and the soul in a moment; and all rose by one impulse to their feet, to see the small figures that passed in procession below, and the slightest of all, on which every eye was fixed. With

At Guildhall.

The Coronation.

all the support that loyal sympathy could give, it seemed as if the sovereignty must be cruelly oppressive; for here the antique conception of British regality pervaded the entire ceremonial;—a regality which had immeasurably more of power and personalty in it than is true in our day. The service, if it had not been antique in its cast, would have been shocking, with its mixing up of worship to God with homage to the sovereign, savouring of the old belief of divine right. The ancient Edward's mantle of cloth of gold looked cumbrous and oppressive, and the sceptre and orb too heavy; and it was a relief to remember that the regal power was not now what these symbols represented, and that the responsibility was lightened in proportion. Such as it remained, there was every indication this day that, under this lessened responsibility, all support would be given that the affection of the people could yield.

QUEEN'S MARRIAGE.

Soon followed events which must have made these shows—even the greatest of them—appear trivial to the Sovereign. Her marriage ensued; and we find in the registers of the time, notices of Prince Albert's name being inserted, by command of the Queen in Council, "in all the prayers, liturgies, and collects for the royal family;" and of the Prince becoming a citizen of London in Guildhall; and next, of the registrar of the Belgrave district being summoned to Buckingham palace, to enter on the registration books of St. George's, Hanover-square, the birth of a royal infant. The christening ensued; but not next in order; for, the day before, Prince Albert, while skating in the presence of the Queen and one lady of the Court, ran some risk from the breaking of the ice. He could not have got out by himself; but the ladies kept their presence of mind, and saved him.—In another year, on the 9th of November, 1841, the heir to the throne was born. Amidst the general joy and congratulations, there were many who thought of the new-born child with pity and solicitude, feeling that it is in our days no privileged lot to be born to a throne, even in England, where the limitation of the kingly power makes the throne safer than elsewhere. In a century overclouded by the approach of a War of Opinion in Europe, princes are born to a life of toil and solicitude if they are to be made equal to their station, and to real evils (for toil and solicitude are in themselves no evils) if they are not made equal to their station. But here was the great immediate blessing that the Queen had a son; and all were ready to rejoice with her.

BIRTH OF HEIR.

STATE OF THE PEOPLE.

As for the state of the people—their condition had been declining almost from the beginning of this period to the end; and it was too clear that they were sinking still. The operatives were first employed half-time: then they had no work, and were known to be living upon their savings: then there were public meetings, to consider what could be done, and public subscriptions which came to an end while still no prospect opened: and then there were a thousand operatives employed on the roads in one place, and 5000, 10,000 14,000 seemed to be merely waiting for alms or death in others. As usual, crime began to abound. The murders came in batches;—horrible poisonings, Combination murders, murders for purposes of theft, from the nobleman in his bed to the sawyer in his pit, abound in the chronicles of the period. New crimes arose, not bearing an immediate relation to the distress, as a vitiated atmosphere produces not only one frightful epidemic, but new or aggravated disease of other kinds. Ships were cast away, one after another, from wretches

CRIME.

1835—41. boring holes to sink them, in order to obtain the insurance.—A plot for the commission of extensive forgery was matured and put in action on the Continent, by a few scamps, hitherto called noblemen and gentlemen—some Scotch—some foreign—whose object was to defraud several European banks to a large amount, by forging the circular letters of credit of a London bank, and presenting the supposed letters of credit in various continental cities on the same day, or before communication could be established. The *Times* newspaper, having received early information of the plot, ran the risk of action for libel and other consequences, in order to put the commercial world upon its guard. It succeeded in this object, was prosecuted for libel, and condemned in damages of One Farthing. Its bold course, both in giving warning, and afterwards in pleading justification of the libel, won for its proprietors the public admiration and gratitude, which were expressed in the form of a handsome subscription for a testimonial. The proprietors declined the testimonial for themselves, and requested that the money might be spent for the public benefit. After two tablets, recording the facts, had been put up in the Royal Exchange and the office of the *Times*, the fund was devoted to the establishment of two scholarships, to be given to youths elected from London schools to the Universities.—As might be expected, the game-law murders of the period were many and shocking. In the best times, there are hungerers enough in the rural districts to make it dangerous for gentlemen to preserve game at the cost of a vast amount of human food, consumed by hares and birds before the eyes of starving men: and in a season of distress, the sight is one not to be endured. We find accordingly a long list of poachings and the consequent murders; and at the same time the most effective enemy of the game-laws in their strong-hold, the House of Lords, died—too soon for this as for many another good cause—Lord Suffield, who died in the summer of 1835, in his fifty-fourth year. Perhaps, if he had lived to this time, we might have been released from the game-laws, which are a disgrace to our law books, to our practice of professing reform of abuses, and to the praise we utter in our churches of justice and mercy, and care lest we cause our brother to offend.—Even these things are, however, less fearful than one manifestation of the time, which tells as much as the new practice of poisoning for the sake of payments from burial clubs.

Times Testimonial. Annual Register, 1841, Chron. 363.

Game Laws.

Lord Suffield.

Opium Eating.

While the Temperance cause seemed to be advancing every where, and tea-drinkings with speeches, and dances with music and lemonade, were noticed in newspapers, almost from day to day, certain disclosures were made at a meeting of the Westminster Medical Society in 1839, which appalled the few who heard or attended to the information. The increase of the consumption of opium in England had led to inquiry. It was found that the abjuration of intoxicating drinks was little more than a set-off against the increased consumption of opium. The insurance offices were consulting how to defend their interests under this new peril to human life:—they could guard against liability from opium eating in future policies of insurance; but they found their capital in danger from the intemperance of persons already insured. It was not only, nor chiefly, in the insuring class of society that the practice existed. It spread far more fearfully among the hungry. In the large manufacturing towns, the druggists now employed their spare minutes throughout the week in making up penny or twopenny packets of opium for sale on Saturdays, when hundreds

Annual Register, 1839, Chron. 272.

of poor creatures would come to receive from the long rows on the counter the packet which was to give them stupor till the miserable Monday morning.

Church-building and Bishoprics.

The churches were active, as if trying all this time to heal these social woes. There was much building of new churches in London and elsewhere; and, while the desperate poor were emigrating in shoals—getting away at all hazards from the sickening scene at home—exertions were made by bishops and religious societies to provide for the endowment of bishoprics in the colonies. Much zeal was shown by the three great Church Societies for Missionary objects, during the whole of this period, and noble sums of money were raised. But the misery and crime to be dealt with were not of a kind to be remedied by a provision for worship; and it was observable, that while the existing churches bore a very small proportion to the population of their districts, they yielded more room than was occupied. Churches come of religion; but religion does not come of churches.—An obstacle to "the operation of religion on the masses" was the intolerance of spirit which yet remained from the critical period which has been before described. The Peterborough bishop, Dr. Herbert Marsh, whose Eighty-seven Questions had first occasioned the open divisions in the Church, died at this time, in 1839, leaving the religious world yet heaving with the tempest, of which he furnished the first squall. The sects within and without the Church were yet quarrelling; the Catholics were increasing in numbers, founding new institutes, and building new chapels: Protestant clergymen were not only declaring at public meetings against grants to Maynooth, but detailing every instance of superstition they met with among poor Irish and other ignorant Catholics, to excite hatred against the priests. Here and there, Dissenters were carried to prison for refusal to pay church-rates which they were assured by lawyers could not be legally levied, while a pious ship-agent (who was happily defeated in the Courts) was endeavouring to make deductions from the wages of the Catholic and Presbyterian among the crew, because they objected to attend the Church service on board ship; and a clergyman here and there was refusing burial to persons baptized by lay preachers out of the Church, or by Dissenting clergy. And, as an illustration of the need there now is of provision for liberty of conscience in regard to oaths, a case occurred which did not tend to interest the poor and suffering in favour of religion, when an insolvent, a man "of good moral character," entitled otherwise to his discharge, was sent back to prison, and kept from working to maintain his "starving children and unhappy wife," because the Commissioner could not administer the necessary oath to a person who, like this man, did not believe in a future life. The fault was not in the Commissioner; nor yet in the man: for, if he had been capable of dishonesty, he would have professed the belief required for his enlargement. The fault was in the imposition of penalties for opinion; and it was one likely, as far as it was known, to operate in alienating the ignorant and the careless alike from the religion in whose name such things were done.

Religious Intolerance.

Annual Register, 1840, Chron. 73.

Annual Register, 1839, Chron. 278.

Annual Register, 1839, Chron. 141.

Grace Darling.

An incident was in the mean time happening which preached a softening and sanctifying lesson, uninterrupted by theological jars and social bigotry. In a light-house on the coast of Northumberland, within view of the Fern Islands, lived a family of the name of Darling. The night of the 6th of September, 1838, was stormy; and the Forfarshire steam-boat, whose boiler was

1835—41. in bad order, struck on one of the Fern Islands, and parted in two. Darling, becoming aware of the wreck, at three in the morning, desired to put off in his boat, to render assistance; and his daughter Grace, a simple-hearted girl of twenty-two, prepared, as a matter of course, to go with him. The wife and mother, seeing how stormy the sea was, opposed their purpose, and at last consented only on the condition that she might share their peril. When they were stepping into the boat, her husband represented to her that, by occupying a place in the boat, she would deprive one passenger of a chance for life, whereas, by remaining at home, she might be of use in making fires, and preparing blankets, and clothes, and food, for those whom he might bring. She consented, and passed an agonizing hour while they were gone. By Darling's prudence, decision, and authoritative tone to the half-frantic survivors on a ledge of rock, he and his daughter accomplished the saving of nine lives. Grace thought nothing of her share in the deed, and never could understand the sensation that it caused throughout the kingdom. She always said, and truly, that there were girls all along the coast who would and did accompany their fathers and brothers to sea in storms, when they were called on to preserve life: and it is the noblest part of the noble lesson afforded by this event that we are reminded of the virtue which lives and acts in quietness while the turbulent elements of human life and society are making tempests upon the surface. An event like this discloses to us occasionally the moral riches which shine in our depths; and then the fate of the unconscious revealer is something like that of Grace Darling. Her name flew abroad over the world. As she sat at her sewing in the little room in the light-house, the world came to pay her homage. The rich, the high-born, and the good, visited her. Those who could not come sent poems, or books, or money. The protection of her father was not enough under the pressure of suitors and worshippers; and the Duke of Northumberland made himself her guardian, took care of her money, kept an eye upon her lovers, and promoted, as far as he could, the quietness she longed for. But there was no more quietness for her. Her life had lost its simplicity, though her mind and manners never did. Her health gave way under the impossibility of repose; and she died in a few years—as much a martyr to her own deed as if the boat had been swamped in its passage to the rock. Seldom has so tender a sorrow spread through the heart of the nation as when the newspapers told of the death of Grace Darling. She had found quiet, however; and a more intense image of repose can scarcely be presented than her monument, where she lies with her oar resting on her arm. That monument will preach a lesson of self-sacrifice, and rouse a spirit of heroic good-will, long after the sectarian strifes of the time shall have been forgotten.

Agricultural Associations.

We perceive, during this period, preparations making for the future welfare of the great mass of the nation, which are perhaps all the more hopeful for not contemplating so much as they will effect. While a terror of Socialism and Communism was spreading among the aristocracy—while there were debates in parliament upon Socialism in England, as if it were an aggression, and not a social symptom, and while thoughtful men, and those who had correspondence with the continent, were privately telling each other how Communism was spreading under the surface all through France and Germany, some of the English aristocracy were instituting

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an Association from which more might be hoped than from perhaps any other institution whatever but a general system of Education. The Agricultural Societies which came into action about this time may, however, be regarded as educational. While providing for the increased production of food, they provide also for the exercise of the faculties of the most ignorant and inert part of our population—the agricultural labourers. The Anti-Corn-Law League was already educating a considerable portion of the people by rousing them to thought and sound knowledge on a matter which closely concerned them, and by teaching them to apply to the management of their public interests the same qualities with which they conduct their private affairs: and now, the institution of Agricultural Associations promised to work in a somewhat similar manner on another portion of the people. The League disclaimed a party character altogether; and, in fact, though originated and chiefly sustained by Reformers, it included many Conservatives, and men of all shades of opinion in politics, as in every thing else outside the question of a supply of food. The Agricultural Associations, in like manner, proscribed political subjects at their meetings. There were men of all political parties who saw that, of all branches of industry in our country, agriculture was the most backward. They saw a whole world of science, chemical and meteorological, opening which, in its application to agriculture, might mark a new era in our social destiny. They saw that no society can long hold together in which industry fails, as with us, to obtain a sufficiency of the comforts of life; and they believed that time might be gained for the consideration of our difficulty, if the difficulty itself could not be solved, by a largely increased production of food on our own soil. They believed that there was no surplus of labour within our bounds; but rather that, if science and good management were applied to agricultural as to manufacturing processes, the hands would be found too few for the work, and each part of the work would produce a larger proportion of food. If so, such Socialists, Communists, and Chartists, as might still be bent on trying new principles and methods of society, would discuss the matter more coolly, more amiably, and much more cautiously, while feeling every year, in their state of improved welfare, that they had more to lose and less to gain by a fundamental change. Those who thus thought hailed with a very serious delight the first and second annual meetings of the Royal Agricultural Society of England, which happened during this period—the first being in 1839. Minor societies had existed for some time before. It was cheering to see, at these meetings, the Duke of Richmond and Lord Spencer walking in to dinner together, and high tory and deep radical chemists helping out one another's information about soils and manures and food for stock: and the rush to the ploughing matches, and the stock-yards, and the implement sheds; and even the road, "resembling the route from London to Epsom on a race day." "Such societies," as an observer remarked in a contemporary newspaper, "supply to the farmer what Mechanics' Institutes have supplied to the better sort of working men—a stimulus to inquiry, a desire for information, and a disposition to contribute from their own experience to any topic of the day. The farmers have been long enough blamed as isolated men, as enemies of education, and as the repositories of prejudice: what is better calculated to renovate them than Agricultural

Spectator, 1839, p. 991.

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Societies?" And if these societies should so improve the production of food as to afford to a single generation, before it is too late, the leisure of comfort to consider impartially their own condition and the prospects of their children, they will assuredly take rank among the chief blessings of the time. They may be considered as one of the results of the Peace: for they originated in the improvement of chemical science, and the knowledge that a high order of agriculture existed abroad; both derived from free intercourse with the philosophers and cultivators of the continent.

India Cotton.

By the attention given to the growth of cotton in India, a prospect of manifold good was opened—to this country, its operatives, its manufacturers, and its consumers, from our dependence on more regions than one for a supply of cotton:—to the inhabitants of India, from the establishment of a new branch of production—and to the negro race, from American slavery becoming unprofitable when opposed to free labour. The East India Directors, the Manchester Chamber of Commerce, some machinists, some private capitalists, and even the Governor-General of India, were at this time consulting and experimenting on the growth and preparation of cotton in India, and already the mountain roads were reported to be blackened with bullocks bringing the produce down to the coast. Much remained to be done; and much still remains to be done: but the conditions are more and more understood, and the purpose holds.

Niger Expedition.

A more ambitious and direct attempt on behalf of the negro race, made at the end of this period, failed—owing to the proud and headstrong character of the benevolence which prompted it. It has never been questioned of late years that a principal method of supplanting slavery is by civilizing the Africans, and making an innocent commerce more acceptable to them than the trade in slaves. A few Liverpool merchants had for some years acted on this sound view, and had established a certain amount of commerce on the Niger—conducting it with the caution and prudence which belong to private enterprises—sending crews of seasoned whites and trained negroes, and appearing in a commercial character alone. Most unhappily, the idea was seized by some who were ill-qualified to conduct such a scheme. Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton—so efficient, so successful, so thoroughly in his place in parliament—went astray in this new enterprise; and its failure broke his heart. He put in action all his great social power, and we read in the chronicles of the time of public meetings, with Prince Albert in the Chair, so crowded that persons were carried out fainting; of the gratulations and mutual praises of statesmen and prelates, of grand subscriptions and yet grander hopes. Bulletins of the progress of equipment were published, and the names of officers and crews, and programmes of proceedings, and vivid descriptions of the model farm, and the other monuments of the expedition, which were to arise on the banks of the Niger. All this time, the voice of warning did not cease: but those who should have been their guides in an enterprise which nobody else understood were slighted, and even insulted with insinuations that their opposition proceeded from sordid selfishness—from a fear that their trade would be interfered with. Some of them would not be driven back from their object of saving as much misery as possible of all that they foresaw from the rashness and ignorance of the scheme as planned in London; and it was a steam-boat

Annual Register, 1840. Chron. p. 52.

of theirs which was hovering about the mouths of the Niger (plying up and down the river for the purpose) which saved the few survivors. The fever swept away the greater number of those who were sent forth to their death, or volunteered for it: the model-farm was deserted; and, worst of all, pledges made in the name of our Queen and country were necessarily left unredeemed, and remain so to this day. No one can say how far the civilization of Africa has been set back by the spectacle of our weakness and apparent bad faith, in a region where we should have gone in assured power or not at all. Mr. Jamieson was one of the Liverpool merchants whose warnings were loudest and truest; and his steamer it was that saved the remnant of the expedition. His information was mainly derived from Mr. Becroft, who was familiar with the region: and it was Mr. Becroft who commanded the rescuing boat. The Niger Association did not at once dissolve. It had no more gifts of public money, and its subscriptions dwindled. When, at the meeting of 1842, Sir T. Fowell Buxton sent a letter and £50 instead of appearing, some taunts were uttered; but they were unjust. He was too ill to appear. By his Life, we learn that he strove hard for comfort in regarding the catastrophe as a mysterious dispensation, overlooking the grave faults which had made the issue anything but mysterious to others: but he could not get over the shock. He never again held up his head. And he died in 1845, in the 60th year of his age.

President Steamer.

The period exhibits more than usual disaster. In 1839, we read of the christening of the President Steam Ship, the most magnificent vessel of her kind ever seen in England. At that time "several thousand persons" went in a day to Limehouse, to examine and admire. A year and a half afterwards, she did not return from an American voyage when expected: and nothing has ever been heard about her. For many weeks, the families of those on board were tantalized and tortured by floating rumours of her safety or of her fate: but in two months, they put on mourning, and declared that they would hope no more.—The fires that happened within these few years seem now, in the retrospect, to have been strangely destructive. In the dry season of 1835, a gipsying party who had made their tea among the underwood on Wanstead Flats, neglected to put out the fire; and the consequence was a conflagration which laid waste 20 acres of pasturage. It required the digging of a deep trench by a company of sappers and miners from Woolwich to stop the mischief at last. Two or three weeks afterwards the same misfortune happened on Clapham Common, where the villas of the neighbourhood were for some time in great danger. Two acres of brushwood and furze were in this case laid bare. In 1838, while the destruction of the Houses of Parliament was still fresh in men's minds, the Royal Exchange was burned down. It was night before the fire, which must have been burning for some time, was discovered; it was a bitterly cold night (the 10th of January) with a north-east wind; and it took some time to thaw the hose of the engines when they arrived; so the flames spread and rose, illuminating the Bank, and other buildings near, till they seized upon the tower of the Exchange. The bells began to chime as stones and timber began to fall; and of all airs, the one they chimed was "There 's nae luck about the house." They were chiming "God save the Queen" when one after another of the eight gave over and

Fires.

Annual Register, 1835. Chron. 127.

Annual Register, 1838. Chron. 1.

Royal Exchange.

Annual Register, 1838. Chron. 28.
Fire in the Temple.

York Minster. Annual Register, 1840. Chron. 48.

Camberwell Church. Annual Register, 1841. Chron. 22.

Annual Register, 1841. Chron. 28.
Wynyard.

At Dundee. Annual Register, 1841. Chron. 3.

Astley's Theatre.

fell. The great City seal was found by searching among the ruins. Serious as were the consequences to the merchants of London, the loss which was most mourned was that of the old statue of Sir Thomas Gresham, which had escaped the great Fire of London. Only small fragments remained of it now. The grasshopper-vane was saved, and was reserved from the sale of remains which took place three months after the fire, when various curiosities, which could not come into use for the new Exchange, were bought up at high prices. In March of the same year, happened the most mischievous fire for its extent that can be conceived. A lawyer of the Inner Temple came home from his club at two in the morning, and left a candle burning near some papers. The papers must have caught; for from that spot spread a fire which consumed a mass of deeds and other documents, some of which will be missed for centuries to come. The Attorney-General suffered grievously. His library was worth 3000 guineas; but that was not the greatest part of his loss. Upwards of eighty chambers, with nearly the whole of their contents, were destroyed. In May, 1840, York Minster was on fire again—by some carelessness of workmen, it was supposed. The next morning the nave was roofless, the belfry reduced to a mere shell, and the bells lying below, having burst through the floors in their fall. At the beginning of the next year, the Old Church at Camberwell was destroyed by fire—nothing being left but the bare walls: and in a fortnight after, the princely residence of the Marquess of Londonderry—Wynyard in Durham. The loss of pictures and antiquities was a matter of general concern. In Dundee, there was a fire which destroyed three churches; and the inhabitants, and half Scotland, mourned over the wreck of its old cathedral. In June, Astley's Amphitheatre was burned down. As no one was aware that a life was lost—a servant girl having perished—the interest of the spectators was about the saving of the stud—Ducrow's famous stud. The horses were bent upon going into the ring, as usual; and it required no little gallantry and skill to save as many of them as escaped. The loss cost poor Ducrow his reason and his life.

Balloons.

Annual Register, 1836. Chron. 150.

Some less fatal shows offered themselves, meanwhile. There was a passion for balloons; and in November, 1836, three gentlemen enjoyed a glorious flight, from London to a village in Nassau—480 miles in 17 hours. The passage over the dark sea, and the Belgian district of furnaces—the sea of mist below in the morning, with the rustling of forests coming up like the sound of waves on the beach, the paling of the stars, and the gorgeous sunrise shedding its colours over the vast heavens, and the earth retired below, are described as inexpressibly solemn and beautiful. The next year, a foolish attempt to descend by a parachute from a balloon ended fatally; and the year after, a more scientific attempt succeeded—the voyager floating downwards for thirteen minutes after cutting the single cord that suspended him from the balloon.

Thames Conservancy. Annual Register, 1839. Chron. 119.

There was a grand spectacle on the Thames, almost from end to end, in 1838, when the Lord Mayor, as Conservator of the Thames, explored its course and condition in state barges. The agitation against the defilement of the Thames by the filth of London had not then begun; and the processions, and gratulations, and strewing of flowers, and feastings, belonging to "the business of the conservancy of the Thames," went on through six days, as if the

THE EGLINTOUN TOURNAMENT.

Annual Register, 1839. Chron. 153.

MUMMY INQUEST.

Thames were really preserved in good order. The civic ideas of this duty will probably have changed, before the next pageant of the kind is seen at Henley. —A piece of aristocratic pastime, "which had been two years in preparation," took place at Eglintoun Castle, in August 1839, under the name of the Eglintoun tournament. It was an imitation of the ancient tournaments: and no expense was spared to make it as like as possible to the old shows of arms. But such attempts never fully succeed—never succeed in being more than child's play, like the "dressing up" in the nursery—except in virtue of being a regularly perpetuated custom. The real antiquity which resides in such custom renders venerable the appearance of the Champion at the Coronation; and even endeared the grotesque devices and corporation practices which lasted in English towns till the Municipal Bill swept them all away. But in the Eglintoun fete there was no such sanction; and, in spite of the host's expenditure of £40,000, the crowds who came—some from a distance of 400 miles—the personal charms of the Queen of Beauty, the valour and skill of the jousting knights, and the desire of every one to be pleased, there seems to have been a universal sense of failure. The weather was bad, and "the feudal appearance of the display was sadly marred by thousands of umbrellas: . . . the Queen of Beauty and her ladies, instead of mounting their palfreys, were confined within their carriages." If ever mailed knight swore at the envious clouds, it must have been the young earl of Eglintoun on these critical days.—A more genuine piece of antiquity was presented in the case of an inquest held in Ireland on a body found in a bog. The bones powdered under the touch, while the muscles were so hard that the body bore the weight of a man, and substances rebounded from striking the limbs. Our mummy, it is true, could reckon only 100 years to every 1000 of an Egyptian: but there was something affecting in its being on our own ground; and yet more in an inquest being held on a being so mysterious, of whose ways and thoughts, and goings and comings, no man could tell any thing. There was a tradition of a suicide having been buried thereabouts, some hundreds of years before; but no one could say whether this were he.

TRIAL OF A PEER.

Annual Register, 1840. Chron. 79.

If the Eglintoun tournament was not regarded with popular respect, much less was the other lordly show of this period—the trial of Lord Cardigan, for duelling offences, in the House of Lords. There is little in the affair that any one would wish to dwell upon, or that needs be dwelt upon; though a cursory notice is necessary. Lord Cardigan, formerly Lord Brudenell, was from time to time coming before the public as the aggressor in some quarrel—the public seeing that his antagonists in these quarrels were usually mild and gentlemanly men, of rank lower than his own in life and in the service. He was known to have connexions at Court, and interest at the Horse Guards; and no one could avoid the conviction that, for these reasons, an amount of social misbehaviour was passed over in him which would have immediately ruined almost every other officer in the army. After sundry adventures with his officers, in which their pride was wounded, their feelings exasperated, and their prospects ruined, by mess-room quarrels, tyranny on parade, and courts-martial, now on himself and now on an antagonist, Lord Cardigan fought a duel with a Captain Harvey Tuckett, and wounded him. As he was arrested, there was no choice but to try him; and he was tried by his peers amidst a parade and expense of which, according to universal opinion, the occasion was not worthy. Every one knew that Lord Cardigan would come off safe—duelling being regarded as it still is in our country; and Lord Cardigan's interest having already borne him safely through worse perils: but no one could have anticipated such an audacious evasion of justice as actually took place. It was admitted that certain parts of the evidence related to Captain Harvey Tuckett, and that the person in Court called by that name was rightly so called; but whether the one and the other was the same Captain Harvey Tuckett was professed to be doubtful, and supposed to be purposely left so. And thus the prosecution fell to the ground. It was not without its results, however. The mockery of justice, the lavish expenditure which thus became an insult to the nation, and the additional presumption now afforded that Lord Cardigan could not be thrown off by society, however he might oppress it, all went to deteriorate the position of the peers in respect of the people, and turned the grand antique show of the trial into a very coarse modern offence. The Duke of Cleveland's reply was not forgotten, when, instead of using the established form, "Not guilty, upon my honour," he said "Not guilty, *legally*, upon my honour." Its significance was appreciated, though it did not go so far as the popular sentiment.

Compn. to the Almanac, 1842, p. 175.

SUICIDES FROM THE MONUMENT.

If any country cousin of the next generation should observe that the summit of the London Monument does not correspond with the old pictures of it, he may learn that the grating which by no means adorns the pillar, was put on in 1839, in consequence of two suicides having taken place in that year, within a few weeks of each other—a young girl, first, and then a boy of fifteen having thrown themselves over. As fantastic suicides have an infectious character, it was suggested by some persons on the first occasion to obviate the possibility of another such act: and after the second suicide, no time was lost in making all safe.

Annual Register, 1839. Chron. 165, 205.

INDIA MAILS.

Since the establishment of steam transit in the Eastern seas, great attention had been devoted to the improvement of India Mail communication. Many experiments of different routes were proposed, and some tried. Among others, there was an exploratory expedition to survey the Euphrates, in the hope that steamers might carry the mails by that river as far as Beles, 100 miles from Antioch, whence the way would be clear and easy enough. Two steamers were sent out in frame from Liverpool, with all needful materials and stores, and a picked company of officers and men; the whole being conveyed by the George Canning to the coast of Syria. All went well; the vessels in frame were transhipped and carried in boats up the Orontes, and then over the desert, and then put together and floated on the Euphrates; and the river itself had been to some extent explored, when a tremendous hurricane capsized one of the vessels—the Tigris—drowning fifteen of her men, and some natives. The survivors returned, impressed with the importance of establishing a free communication in those regions, by means of the great rivers, both for the transmission of the mails, and the opening of a profitable trade. They did not foresee how soon European travellers would be stumbling upon old Nineveh, and laying open treasures of antiquity, in whose presence people would forget that they came to see about India mails and the introduction of commerce. In 1840, the India papers told some striking facts about the consequences of

Annual Register, 1835. Chron. 18.

Annual Register, 1841. Chron. 42.

improved communication with home, by steam or otherwise. Within five years, the number of letters had doubled, though the inland rate of postage was still very high. The largest proportion of letters had before been sent through Calcutta; now Bombay was the letter-depôt: but the decrease at Calcutta was only 33 per cent., while the increase at Bombay was 500 per cent.

These changes may appear small in comparison with the improvements that have taken place since: but their importance was inestimable. If our route had been for ever by the Cape, the prospects of India—of the raising of the condition of the millions of her natives—would have been far inferior to what they are now; and on the elevation of those Indian millions—on the development of their free labour by their social progression, the fate of Africa and much of America appears to depend. It has been said before, but it can hardly be said too often, that the abolition of negro slavery every where, and the civilization of Africa, depend, to all appearance, on the kindly development of the resources of India.

Acarus Crossii.

Among the scientific facts put forward during this period, there is one which must obtain emphatic notice, whenever and wherever it might occur. For a long time, some men eminent in science had occasionally avowed that they found great difficulty in refusing evidence of the production of animal life by chemical agencies. It was no new thing for men who knew what they were saying, to declare a belief that animalcules were absolutely originated without any parents, in both liquids and solids, under certain conditions. In 1836, a philosopher was startled by an appearance which compelled attention to the inquiry whether such things could be. Mr. Crosse, whose name has been given to the acarus produced under the conditions detailed by him at a meeting of the British Scientific Association, "was looking for siliceous formations, when animal matter appeared instead." In the midst of elements fatal to animal life, under the surface of a caustic fluid, within an enclosure from which the atmosphere had been driven out, and where there was no possibility that ova could have been deposited, or could have escaped destruction if deposited, insects appeared, after an electric current had been established for a sufficient number of months. Without the electricity, and without some other conditions, the insects have failed to appear. With those conditions, they have been produced again and again from that day to the present. If allowed to remain in the enclosure, they perish. If let out as soon as they appear, they feed, reproduce their kind, and live till the first frost, which is always fatal to them. At a lecture at the Royal Institution, in 1837, Mr. Faraday avowed his full belief of the facts stated by Mr. Crosse, similar appearances having presented themselves to him, in the course of his electrical experiments: but he left it doubtful whether it was a case of production or revivification. This all-important point was investigated by Mr. Weekes, of Sandwich, and again and again by Mr. Crosse, who is prepared with evidence regarding the formation of these animals, which cannot but command the attention of men of science, whenever they shall have left off attributing to him theories which he disavows, and opinions and sentiments which he never entertained. When the contempt and prejudice with which great discoveries are always received shall have subsided, it will be admitted that Mr. Crosse has merely made known, in the simplest manner, appearances which presented

Annual Register, 1837. Chron. 21.

themselves to him, propounding no theory, drawing no inferences, and attacking no established belief. While, for thirteen years, too many who might have tested his assertions have been merely expressing contempt of them, he and one or two more have been diversifying their experiments as much as they could, and found themselves occasionally rewarded by the appearance of acari. Mr. Weekes baked the frame of his apparatus in a powerful heat, distilled the water, excluded the atmosphere by fumes constantly rising in a bell glass, and subjected the silicate employed to a white heat. Under these safeguards against the previous existence of animal life, he saw the liquid in his vessel grow turbid—he saw the gelatinous matter collect round the negative wire of his battery, which was immersed in the fluid; and he next saw one of the new insects emerge from the gelatine, and run off to a corner of the apparatus. Under the same electrical conditions, Mr. Weekes employed different substances, on account of one containing more carbon than another; and he then found, as he had ventured to hope, that more insects were produced when there was more carbon, and fewer when there was less. Mr. Crosse has persevered in his experiments,* and has detected the formation of the acarus from the first appearance of a minute white speck, through its gradual enlargement, till it puts forth the little waving lines which are to become legs, through its first indications of life, and its growth to that maturity which enables it to leave its birth-place, shift for itself, and propagate its kind. In connexion with this, he has assured himself of the significant fact of the similarity of the first stages of the production of acari, and of certain mineral crystallizations, electrically produced. He finds the appearances of the white speck the same through the processes of enlargement and of putting out lateral filaments: but then, according to diversities of treatment, these filaments become, in the case of the mineral, rigid, shining, transparent, six-sided prisms, and in that of the animal, limbs of a body endowed with vitality.—These are results too serious and significant to be treated with either levity or anger: yet have they been received with too much of both. The objections made have been mostly of the *a priori* sort: and it is needless to say that they cannot withstand the evidence of experiment. Mr. Crosse's invitation to the scientific part of society is to join him in ascertaining, by every possible variety and patience of experiment, what is the truth of the matter; and, till this is done, his information remains the best that can be had on a subject of unbounded philosophical significance. As such, its first proposal for attestation is an incident worthy of special notice in a history of the time.

Vestiges of Creation, p. 189, (1st edit.)

Deaths.
Captain Kater.

Several men of science died during this period. First, Captain Kater, who had borne an important part in the trigonometrical survey of India, and had lost his health in the work. After his return, he earned, by many scientific services, his admission into almost all the learned societies in Europe, and died in 1835, aged fifty-eight.—The greatest of mathematical and astronomical instrument makers, Edward Troughton, died in the same year, possessed of the

Edw. Troughton.

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* The following statements, which are but a small portion of a most interesting exposition, are given, by permission, from a letter of Mr. Crosse to the author, bearing date August, 1849.

John Pond.

Dr. Olinthus Gregory.

J. L. M‘Adam.

Sir Anthony Carlisle.

Sir A. P. Cooper.

gratitude of the first philosophers of his age, who could not have effected their discoveries without the aid of his wonderful instruments.—Pond, the astronomer, died in 1836.—In 1838, Dr. Olinthus Gregory, Professor of Mathematics at Woolwich, was compelled to resign his chair—his health being destroyed by excessive study; and he died in 1841. He was known throughout the world of science by many publications; and he had the honour of being one of the twelve founders of the Astronomical Society of London.—In 1836, died Mr. M‘Adam, the reformer of roads, whose name was familiar to every ear in England, till railways extinguished all interest in every other kind of road. Mr. M‘Adam was a striking instance of the mental activity which is always ready to respond to opportunity. There have been many county magistrates and trustees of roads in our time; yet no one but Mr. M‘Adam was effectually impressed by the want of scientific principles shown in the construction of roads. Once so impressed, this Ayrshire magistrate devoted his mind to the subject, and in his 60th year gave forth his plan, which was in use almost all over the country before his death—in his 81st year.—Two great surgeons died in 1840 and 1841; Sir Anthony Carlisle, and Sir Astley P. Cooper. Sir A. Carlisle introduced some new surgical instruments of great value: he laboured usefully in the field of comparative anatomy, aided by the sympathy and knowledge of his friend, Sir Joseph Banks: and he was the best friend and supporter of the Westminster Hospital, of which he was senior surgeon when he died, at the age of 72.—Sir Astley P. Cooper's face and figure are familiar to all, through Sir Thos. Lawrence's fine portrait of him: and his was a face not to be forgotten when once seen. It indicated the power of intellect and kindness of heart which made him the greatest and most popular surgeon of his time. Great as was his fame as an operator, he perhaps did more good by his professional writings. When loaded with honours, rich, and growing old, he retired to the country, in pursuit of repose: but it would not do: he wanted some interests more stirring than those afforded by his library; and returned to London and to practice. He was still busy when death overtook him in his 73rd year. When, in middle life, he removed from the City to the west end of London, his income was the largest ever heard of in the profession—£21,000 a year. George IV. made him a baronet at his coronation, in 1821.

James Weddell.

Simpson.

Captain Gerard.

James Weddell, who in 1825, reached the highest latitude known in the South polar regions, died in ten years after his great feat, aged only 46.—A North polar wanderer perished miserably in 1840, at a yet earlier age. Mr. Simpson, an officer of the Hudson's Bay Company, added many items to our knowledge of the polar coast of North America. He was returning from one of his expeditions when, as is supposed, his reason was overthrown by anxiety and fatigue, and he destroyed himself, after having shot two of his companions. If he had lived, there is every probability that he would have effected more in completing the discovery of a North-west passage than any other man: and an appointment was on the way to him which would have afforded him every facility. His loss is one of the most painful in the list of polar discoverers who have died in the search.—Captain Gerard, the India surveyor and scientific traveller, returned home, as such men do, with health much impaired: but he had wonderful things to tell of the untrodden passes, and

1835—41. inaccessible heights of the Himalayas—many of which, however, he had contrived to explore, looking into Thibet on the one hand, and British India on the other. He resided for some years in Chinese Tartary, while engaged in surveying: and he obtained large information about the tribes, whose race and ways it is highly important to us to understand. But Captain Gerard did not tell us so much as he might have done of his eastern experiences, though it is understood that he left a store of manuscript materials behind him. He died in 1839.—Another African traveller perished in the attempt to reach J. Davidson. Timbuctoo, during this period—Davidson, who had made exploratory journeys in all the four quarters of the world, and desired to crown his enterprises with a feat more difficult than any he had yet accomplished. He had measured the pyramids, both of Egypt and of Yucatan, and could instruct painters in their painting of panoramas of Madras, Thebes, Jerusalem, and Mexico: but he had further set his mind upon reporting of Timbuctoo. He was murdered by Arabs when about 25 days' journey from his object. He is remembered in London by his lectures at the Royal Institution on Egypt and Palestine.—The traveller on the Lebanon sometimes turns aside to visit a desolate grave in a Lady Hester Stanhope. garden, eight miles from Sidon—the gravo of Lady Hester Stanhope, commonly called "the eccentric." She was a niece of William Pitt, and lived in his house for some years; but the greater part of her life was spent in the East, where she went in a spirit of pride, where she gained at first wonderful influence by her imposing pride, and whence she had too much pride to return, after she had discovered the hollowness of her authority. In an age of improved science, hers would have been a less unhappy lot than it was. It appears that her case was one of those, now known to be far from rare, where those faculties operate naturally which are usually put in action by Animal Magnetism. She and her adherents knew nothing about this, and she had just enough power of insight and foresight to suggest some idea of her being inspired, and to keep herself and her servants in a constant and painful state of doubt whether she was inspired or not. She saw and knew some things which others could not see or know: she had curious glimpses of prescience: but she could not depend upon her powers, nor always separate (any more than others of her class) realities from mere dreams. So, some called her a prophetess, and others called her mad, and others believed her merely ill-humoured. She did not know herself what she was, except that, as must be feared, she was helpless and miserable. She passed her latter years in seclusion, in a house she had built on one of the spurs of Lebanon—distrusting her neighbours and servants, partly feared and partly disliked by them, and deserted when sick and dying. An interest attaches to her from the contrast of her early and later life, from the adventures she had gone through, as a kind of chieftainess of the Arabs, and from the peculiarities of her powers and temper—an interest which she did not win through the affections. But there was a sense of relief when her death was announced in England—a sense of comfort that that restless and mysterious mind was asleep, and past the power of annoyance from without and misgiving from within.— Sir Sidney Smith. Sir Sidney Smith's name is associated with the East in most men's minds, from his command having lain repeatedly in the Mediterranean, from his operations in Egypt, and from his great feat of saving Acre when Napoleon marched into Syria. He was a great man in his profession—the first in fame of living British admirals at the time of his death: but there are some who remember him for something else than this—for his attempt to obtain from the Vienna Congress in 1814, the abolition of the slave trade, and the disarming of the piratical states of Barbary. He died at Paris, in his 77th year, in May, 1840.

If we look at the political department of society, we shall see that Death grouped his victims strangely at this time.

PRINCESS AUGUSTA.

BEAU BRUMMELL.

Some were as usual called away who appeared to belong wholly to a former period. The Princess Augusta died in 1840, in the same year with her brother's favourite, Beau Brummell, who had once made such a noise in the world, but who died abroad, destitute and drivelling—another added to the long list of warnings of the fate of Court favourites. This was an extreme case—both the sovereign and the favourite being steeped in the vulgarity which belongs to frivolity and sensualism in an age of enlightenment and a post of high duty. But, vulgar as were the pair, the one did make the other the fashion, and the author of fashion, and then cast him off; or, as some say, compelled Beau Brummell to cast him off. The favourite's last triumph was "cutting the Prince." Having done this, he retired to insignificance and poverty, sinking gradually into idiotcy and death. When his death was announced in England, people turned their eyes towards the Court as it is now, with its centre and heart of simple domestic life, and were glad that the old Court dandies were gone, and that the national offence and disgrace of Court dandyism was buried with them.—Another favourite of the same Prince —his wife, as she was considered by all who looked at the matter in any other light than that of the Royal Marriage Act—Mrs. Fitzherbert went too, at the age of 80. She was married to the prince by the rites of the Catholic Church; and she was regarded with entire respect by the royal family, and therefore by the rest of society, till the day of her death. It must have been with a strange mixture of painful feelings that she watched from her retirement the fortunes of her husband, in his marriage, his conjugal discontents, and his fatal error in bringing his Queen to trial. When she had watched them both to their graves, her own early life must have appeared like a former state of existence.

MRS. FITZHERBERT.

ROTHSCHILD.

DUCHESS OF ST. ALBAN'S.

After the idols of Power went those of Wealth. The richest man and the richest woman in the world died in 1836 and 1837—Mr. Rothschild, and the Duchess of St. Alban's. Mr. Rothschild, "the greatest millionaire of the present or probably any other age," met with no more homage than might fairly be his due. He obtained his wealth by the exercise of faculties respectable in their way; the political power he held was a *quid pro quo*—a natural exchange for financial services; and he spent his money generously and with discrimination. Such deference as waited upon him, he might naturally have enjoyed in any other period of society in which he could have gained his wealth by commerce, and lent it to government. It was in the other case that the offensive and humbling English worship of wealth was most broadly exhibited. The Duchess of St. Alban's would never have been noticed in society but for her wealth. Her early life, when she was a third-rate actress, and in no way distinguished by beauty, talents, or conduct, would have prevented her being heard of if she had not, by marrying a rich banker, become the wealthiest woman of her time. She next married a foolish young peer.

1835—41. His rank gave her no dignity, and her wealth could bring upon him nothing but contempt: yet do the newspapers of the time record all the proceedings of the pair; and the nobles of the land competed for the privilege of their visits. There was much hollowness in it. We know by some things that passed at Abbotsford that the Duchess was made to feel that she was ridiculed and despised; but this makes the mammon-worship more, and not less offensive, by showing that the worship itself was thought a fitting subject for hypocrisy. This woman—for, though a Duchess, she could not be called a lady—had qualities which might have made herself and others happy under more favourable circumstances. She was truly good-natured, and had abundance of energy. Her munificence when she was wealthy was made honourable and trustworthy by the fact, that when she was a very poor actress she had shared all she had with those who were in yet greater need. She had made cheap baby-linen with her own hands to lend because she could not afford to give. This early beneficence communicated its grace to that of an after-time when, having given away in every direction that could be thought of, she still laid by £40,000 a year.

One pair of friends who went nearly together were the old Whig comrades, the Duke of Bedford and Lord Holland. The Duke of Bedford did great good by his liberal encouragement of art and the arts; and his memory will be preserved by the Bedford drainage, the rebuilding of Covent Garden Market, and Woburn church tower, and the Sculpture Gallery at Woburn Abbey; but a far higher respect attends upon his surrender of borough property and influence, by his promotion of Parliamentary Reform.—Lord Holland was the most accomplished of the Whig politicians of his time. None of them understood the principles of reform, or could conceive of fully carrying out as much as they knew; and he was of the number of halting reformers. But he was, of all the statesmen of his time, the most distinguished vindicator of religious liberty. He had self-knowledge enough to be aware that even on this, his strongest point, he needed instruction and guidance: and he sought them: and when his grasp of any principle was once fixed, it was an unrelaxing one. On every occasion on which the rights of religious opinion came into question, his vote and his testimony are found on the side of equal liberty; and when he could do no more, he recorded protests which are worthy of study for their clearness, temperance, and conclusiveness. He was in his 67th year when he died; and the Duke of Bedford in his 74th.—The Marquess Camden died a few days before Lord Holland—revered for an act as patriotic as the Duke of Bedford's surrender of borough property. Lord Camden filled several state offices respectably; but all his other honours pale before that of his having surrendered emoluments from a sinecure office, to the amount of a quarter of a million. There are, doubtless, many men in England capable of a sacrifice like this, and of making it with the grace of quietness and simplicity, as Lord Camden did: but those men are not ordinarily found in the class of aristocratic politicians. To aristocratic politicians it usually appears a matter of course that offices and emoluments exist for their acceptance and benefit. To Lord Camden it appeared that, whatever others might do, he could not feel easy to receive emoluments from the office of Teller of the Exchequer, without doing any work; and he paid the proceeds into the Treasury for a long course of years.

Duke of Bedford.

Lord Holland.

The Marquess Camden.

HENRY HUNT AND WILLIAM COBBETT.

Two restless men—Henry Hunt and William Cobbett—would henceforth agitate no more. They died in 1835, and the world was the quieter for their departure. It is usual to mention them together, because they pursued the same calling of political agitation at the same time: but there was little resemblance in the men. Hunt had not Cobbett's ability;—he had not either Cobbett's clearness of thought, or weight of matter, or power of delivery. Hunt was a mere demagogue: Cobbett was that, and a man of genius too. As for the integrity, and disinterestedness, and truthfulness, of either of them, there is nothing to be said. They were undisguised self-seekers in the midst of their complaints on behalf of the human race, and ostentatiously violent and exaggerated in their statements. The difference is, that Hunt gave us nothing more, while Cobbett gave us clear views on many things, strong stimulus to thought and action, and endless amusement, if the painful sense of his untrustworthiness left any power of enjoying it. Hunt was 62 at the time of his death; and Cobbett 73.—One of Hunt's victims, Watson the elder, died in America soon afterwards. He was a weak man, who would never have gone into the Spa Fields riot, nor any other, but for Hunt's seduction; and he seems to have had no more power than inclination to lead others astray, except under such instigation. After his acquittal at the treason trials of 1817, he attended Hunt's meetings in a quiet way, till the disclosure of the Cato-street conspiracy, when he went to America—not because he was at all implicated in that plot, but because he probably had had enough of unavailing sedition.—With one more name, we seem to dismiss the period of sedition, as connected with the spy system. Sedition we have, and shall have, while the great labour and food question remains unsolved; but if the ferocity on the one side remains, the cruel meanness on the other—the employment of government spies, who must always be tempted to create the treason by which they are to profit—does seem to be over. Unless we are yet to be depraved, and re-barbarized by a long war, it is not to be supposed that a spy system can ever again be dreamed of by any Minister, because it would not be for a moment tolerated by the nation. Reynolds, the United Irishman, who betrayed the Dublin conspirators of 1798, died at Paris in 1836.—One survived him who could look back a good deal further, to a time of yet more fearful commotion;—a ploughman who was ploughing a field at Culloden when the Pretender marched by to the battle. When Robertson saw Prince Charlie, he must have been twenty years old, as he was 114 at the time of his death in 1839.—By his side, old Lady Cork, who died the next year, must have appeared young and sprightly. She was "the lively Miss Monckton" whom we read of in Boswell's Life of Johnson: and lively she was to the end.—It was time now that we were letting the last century go. While younger men were passing away, leaving, however, finished works for their monuments, some of the busy men of the last century had lingered till now; and they were dropping off at last. Among the younger men who were yet, however, far from youthful, were Sir Robert Grant, twin brother of Lord Glenelg, who, after some useful service at home, became Governor of Bombay, and died there in 1838; and Lord William Bentinck, who was Governor-General of India for ten years, and did much for the civilization of the natives, by the discouragement of the Suttee, and infanticide, and other barbarisms: and Sir Wilmot Horton, who made some improvements in

JAMES WATSON.

REYNOLDS THE SPY.

OLD ROBERTSON.

LADY CORK.

SIR ROBERT GRANT.

LORD WILLIAM BENTINCK.

SIR WILMOT HORTON.

Lord Henley. Mr. Barber Beaumont.

colonial administration while Governor of Ceylon: and Lord Henley, who was the first in the field of Church Reform in the crisis of 1832: and Mr. Barber Beaumont, who in 1806 established the first Savings Bank, from which (then called the Provident Institution) the whole Savings Bank system has arisen.—Of the aged, the remains of the last century, two passed away, with whom seemed to be buried the very life of their time;—and also, Sir John Soane, who, as architect, built the Bank and the College of Surgeons; and as patriot, left his art-collection to the nation—the gift being confirmed by Act of Parliament. The two eminent above all these, old or young, were the fortunate brothers Lord Stowell and Lord Eldon.

Sir John Soane.

Lord Stowell. Lord Eldon.

These fortunate and united, and yet not happy brothers, were sons of a Newcastle tradesman, of the name of Scott. They were destined to find and appropriate all that life could give of advancement, professional honours, enormous wealth, and influence proportioned to their powers and success together: and they were destined to find that these things do not make men happy. A more impressive revelation can hardly be presented than in the life of Lord Eldon, of the suffering of a narrow and timid mind, with a presumptuous and jealous temper. An experience of this kind is no surprise in the absence of such remarkable intellectual ability, and such decent morals, as distinguished these brothers. The impressiveness of the lesson consists in the evidence given of the insufficiency of these things for wisdom and peace, when comprehensiveness of views, liberality of principles, and generosity of temper, are absent. Once introduced in London, William, the elder, then Dr. Scott, carried all before him in his profession. He was called to the Bar in 1780, and in ten years held, or had passed through, half a dozen high legal offices. In the Commons, he was a valued government member; and he was to have been raised to the peerage in 1805; but some intrigue came in the way, and kept him a commoner for another sixteen years. He had been made Judge of the High Court of Admiralty in 1798; and he remained on the Bench thirty years. His only son died two months before him: but the old man was beyond the reach of any other affliction than his own imbecility. He was 90 when he died, in 1836. He had had many good things in life, and tasted of intellectual pleasure in a high degree: but there is no evidence of his having even conceived of the loftier satisfactions, which are the gift of faith, hope, and charity. Like his brother, whom he brought into his own path of the law, he had no conception of human progress—no hope but of keeping things as they were—(a hope which every day of his later life disappointed)—and none of that enlarged charity which is unsuspicious of evil, and forgetful of self.—Of professional success, Lord Stowell deserved all that he obtained. He is considered the highest English authority in the departments of ecclesiastical law and the law of nations. His expositions of intricate questions of large compass were so luminous and complete, as to give to his statements the character of revelations of the law, and to his judgments the dignity of oracles. He appears not to have been troubled with his younger brother's infirmity of indecision: and when excuse is made for Lord Eldon's delays of justice on the ground of the comprehensiveness of his views, Lord Stowell's example may be quoted in proof that sagacity and largeness of view may be combined with decision and efficiency.

1835—41.

As for Lord Eldon's delays, there is no doubt that they were made the most of by political opponents, by the sufferers under those delays, and by popular rumour, which sprang from these sources. There is no doubt, also, that Lord Eldon was right in his allegations, and correct in his proofs, that by means of his long and cautious study and deliberation, estates had been preserved or restored to their right owners, which would have been given to the wrong party by a more hasty judge, on a more superficial review of the case. But it is also impossible to deny that there was a large over-balance of evil on the other side—a vast destruction of property, and infliction of misery, from the protraction of Chancery suits, and an engendering of a contempt and dislike of the law far more revolutionary than any of the acts of reform which Lord Eldon held in such painful dread. There can be no doubt to those who read his life, that the action of his mind was much impeded and deranged by his self-regards—his cowardly anxiety about other people's opinions of him, his jealousy of his friends, and his fears of his enemies; while his insolent misjudgment of the people at large was perpetually throwing him out in the exercise of his judgment. His legal learning was never surpassed, if it was ever equalled; and his judgments may be all the more valuable for being so long waited for. Such benefits as he left behind him in this form are no more than a compensation for the mischief he did in his political capacity. Throughout a long life, he was the great obstructive—the grand impediment in the way of improvement—the heavy drag upon social happiness in the country which he professed to love so well. It was a national misfortune that political power should rest in the hands of one whose mind was so narrow, whose temper was at once timid and insolent, and whose heart, if ever he had one, had wasted and withered early in life. He was always fumbling for his heart and his concience, as if to make sure that they were safe; and he chuckled over them as a miser over the gold pieces he can jingle in his fob: but the more he chuckled over his hoarded heart and conscience, the less use they were of to any body else; till at last the world doubted whether he had either. The memoirs of his life present him as the prince of egotists; and as he had lived the life, he died the death, of the egotist. As he more and more viewed all things in their relation to his personal complacency, and as the world did not slacken its course as age and infirmity withdrew him from its activity, he suffered more and more from jealousy and discontent. There was less of his graceful playfulness, and more of watchfulness, fewer jokes, and more suspicions and pets, till even his vigilant life could keep awake no longer; and he had to leave his fields and his woods, and the fame and authority he had so long and tenaciously vindicated, and content himself with those deserts which he estimated so highly, and those pleasures of conscience which he had incessantly spoken of as of a kind of special grant from Providence to himself. When he was gone, the nation anxiously acquitted itself of its obligations to him; the kingdom echoed with acknowledgments of his ability and learning, and praise of his political consistency: his pale face and feeble form were missed in the House of Lords, and in the Law Courts his name was ushered in with compliments: but there is no doubt that, if it had been possible, every body would have been as sorry to see him back again as to witness a revival of the times of which he was the animating spirit. The posthumous homag

Lord Sidmouth.

was not hypocritical: it sprang from the uneasy desire to do justice all the more conscientiously, because the heart gives no help. Lord Eldon died in January, 1838, in the 87th year of his age.—His old comrade, Lord Sidmouth, was almost as old—past 80 when Lord Eldon died. He was gradually declining in health, though not in clearness of mind. He was always an amiable man, even when spending his days in setting traps for conspirators, and hunting traitors. He did those things as an indubitable professional duty. When he had done, he enjoyed a serene conscience, free from misgivings as to his dealings with the ignorant, the hungering, and the exasperated. His business was with the Throne, and not with the people. He thought his successors unaccountably rash and supine in ceasing to coerce the people, and therein to guard the Throne: but he had done with business, and it was their affair. So he resigned himself gently to infirmity and decline, looked upon Lord Eldon's departure as a reminder that he must soon follow; and died, when he had reached Lord Eldon's age, in February, 1844—twenty years after his retirement from official life.

Zachary Macaulay.

Charles Simeon.

Joseph Lancaster.

Zachary Macaulay died during the period under review, one of the most strenuous labourers of the friendly company who toiled so hard for the abolition of Slavery;—and his and Wilberforce's friend, Mr. Simeon, the originator of the Evangelical movement at Cambridge, by which so much was done in the way of the purchase of advowsons, to fill the pulpits of the Establishment with men who should revive the spirit of religion in the lukewarm Church. Mr. Simeon held the same living at Cambridge for fifty-three years; and saw before his death (in his 78th year) such a revival in the Church as he had little anticipated—a revival—partly incited by his own—of the High Church spirit which has always hitherto been found incompatible with human liberty, and hostile to peace on earth, and good-will to men. At Mr. Simeon's funeral, 2000 mourners followed the coffin, and his departure was regarded by his adherents almost that of an apostle.—Joseph Lancaster, who invented and tried the method of mutual instruction in schools before Dr. Bell—though the system is usually named after Dr. Bell—died by an accident in the year 1838—being run over in the streets of New York. Both men should have the credit, such as it is, of the system, which they appeared to have invented independently.

R. Stevens.

Samuel Wesley.

Thomas Attwood.

From the musical world we lost at this time, in 1837, Stevens, whose glees are sung every where, from concerts at Windsor to little gatherings in workshops and water-parties: and in the same year, another of the Wesleys, now fast dropping away from us.—Samuel Wesley, nephew of John, and brother to the musical genius Charles, had the true Wesley organization, disposing him to a life of piety expressed in music. It was this nephew of whom John Wesley said, when it was believed that popish music had made him a Catholic, "he may indeed roll a few years in purging fire, but he will surely go to heaven at last." His life on earth was a purgatory. His head was injured by a fall in his early manhood; and from that time he was subject to long visitations of religious melancholy. Music was his solace: and he has left some which may beguile others of the sorrow of which he knew so much.—Thomas Attwood, Mozart's pupil, died in 1838, leaving two coronation anthems, and a mass of other compositions by which to be commemorated.

He was organist of St. Paul's for many years: and afterwards, for a short time before his death, organist of the chapels royal. He was chorister of the chapel royal, when his ability drew the attention of the Prince of Wales, who bore the expense of his musical education on the continent, in the course of which he formed his intimacy with Mozart.

William Wilkins.
Sir J. Wyatville.

Wilkins, the architect, who built the University Club-house, St. George's Hospital, and the National Gallery, in London, and collegiate buildings at Cambridge and Haileybury, died in 1839; and in the next year, Sir Jeffrey Wyatville, whose father and two uncles were architects of the name of Wyatt. The change of name was a device of George IVth, to distinguish his favourite from his uncles. The renovation and improvement of Windsor Castle are his great deed, and that with which his name will ever be associated; but he left works also in 35 out of the 40 English counties, and 4 out of the 12 Welsh. Though much might be said of these if Windsor Castle was out of sight, they are almost lost in the presence of that noble achievement, which is justly a cause of pride to the nation. The architect reached his 74th year. His likeness remains, not only in Sir Thomas Lawrence's portrait, but in a bust in the long gallery at Windsor, where he, if any man, deserves a place.

William Holl.
Charles Nesbitt.
W. Hilton.
Turnerelli.
William Daniell.
G. Stuart Newton.
Richard Westall.
Sir W. Beechey
Alexander Nasmyth.
David Wilkie.

William Holl, the historical and portrait engraver, died in 1838; and Bewick's apprentice, Nesbitt, whose wood-engravings did ample honour to his master.—Hilton, who succeeded Fuseli in the charge of the Royal Academy, and who was eminently beloved and respected by the pupils there, died in 1839. And in the same year, Turnerelli, the sculptor, who gave us the celebrated figure of Burns at his plough, for the poet's monument at Dumfries.—And we lost Daniell, to whom the untravelled owe so much of their conception of Indian scenery—and Stuart Newton, who brought his talent from his home in Nova Scotia, and cultivated it in Italy, and was rapidly maturing it in London when insanity overtook him, and broke up all the purposes of his life, and at length his life also. He recovered his reason when his strength was too far gone to admit of his rallying. He was in his 40th year.—Westall, second only to Stothard in fame and employment as an illustrator of books, died in 1837; and in 1839, Sir W. Beechey, who was old enough to have been the favourite portrait-painter of George III. and his queen, and to have enjoyed a great range of aristocratic practice before the uprising of Sir Thomas Lawrence.—Another aged artist died, in 1840—Alexander Nasmyth, the father of the Scottish school of landscape painting. Besides his landscapes, however, he has given us something of great value, in his portrait of his friend Burns, of whom we should otherwise have no good picture.—His countryman, David Wilkie, died, too soon, in the same year. It may be that we had had the best of Wilkie, and that no new style that he could ever attempt could yield such results as that which he had forsaken—that of his best years, and by which he is best known: but still his death at fifty-six, on his return voyage from the East, when his mind was full of ideas and images of which we were to have had the benefit, was felt to be a national misfortune; and the mourning, within and without the world of Art, was wide-spread and sincere. The groups round print-shop windows, in all the towns of the kingdom, proved that it was not necessary to belong to the world of art to enjoy Wilkie's pictures. His Village Politicians, his Rent Day, his Cut Finger, and Rabbit

1835—41. on the Wall, his Reading of the Will, and many others, are as well known to hundreds of errand-boys, and homely tradesmen, and persons who were school children in his best time, as to the owners of the pictures themselves. Wilkie was the son of an humble Scotch clergyman. He had travelled in the East during the year before his death—sank suddenly under a feverish attack, after leaving Gibraltar, on his return, and was buried at sea.

Blanchard. Bannister. Of the Actors who were favourites in the last century there were few remaining now; and death was fast making them fewer. Blanchard died in 1835; and in the next year, Jack Bannister, of whom Garrick predicted great things as a painter, but who changed his style of art from motives of filial duty, and became an actor—not thereby losing Garrick's friendship, but gaining instruction from him. There was much regret among play-goers when Jack Bannister took leave of the stage in 1815; and some of this feeling remained to do him honour when, after twenty years more, his death was announced. Fawcett. Colman the Younger. It was Bannister who recommended Fawcett to Colman as his successor; and Colman thought that in Dr. Pangloss, in Colman's own play of the Heir at Law, Fawcett excelled Bannister. And now Fawcett, Colman, and Bannister, all left the world within half a year.—Colman wrote for Mrs. Mrs. Bland. Bland, in all his musical dramas, if indeed his musical dramas were not written for Mrs. Bland; and now, she went too—at the beginning of 1838.—The writer of several favourite pieces played in the days of this group of actors and ever since—A Cure for the Heart-ache, Speed the Plough, and others—Thomas Morton. Thomas Morton, the dramatist, died at the same time with his old friends; and he was presently followed by another dramatist, popular in his day—James Boaden. Charles Mathews. Boaden, the biographer of the Kembles.—Charles Mathews had ventured upon the stage before the last century was out; but it was in his boyhood, and without his father's knowledge. As an established actor, he belonged to our century, his first decided success being subsequent to 1810. Being lamed by an accident, and finding his wonderful imitative faculty more genially and freely exercised in such entertainments as those called "Mathews at Home," than in regular acting, he became the kind of performer that we all remember. Probably no man called out more mirth in any nation than Mathews among us, who do not laugh enough; or among the Americans, who laugh more than we do, but still not enough. Mathews could make all hearts merry but his own. His health was bad; and visitations of epilepsy in his early life left him subject to depression of spirits which nothing could clear. While imitating all he saw and heard, wherever he went, as if the spirit of fun was always overflowing, his heart lay heavy within him. No one knew better than he that, while the wit of one man is related to the mirth of another, the two capacities are not necessarily connected in the same individual. As a man may be mirthful without wit or fun, so a man may have wit and fun without mirth: and poor Mathews would often, like many other wits, have been glad to exchange his mirth-exciting powers for the mirth he excited. He died on Malibran. his 59th birthday.—When the elder generation is boasting of the dramatic favourites of the last century, the young people are usually deciding within themselves that the favourite of their own day could never have been surpassed: and at the time before us, the young lovers of the musical stage were content to hear of the pets of their parents while they could go and listen to Malibran.

She was not English by birth; but she became English by education and through her hearty adoption by the English people. Her childhood was hard and laborious; and her genius broke forth in wildness of exertion and of mirth by turns. She hardly knew what repose was; and she died of exhaustion at the age of 28. She was a wonderful creature; able to achieve whatever she attempted, and able to aspire to more than most people could conceive. The unhappiness of her life no doubt stimulated her professional exertions, and helped to wear out her frame. She allowed herself to be wedded, when very young, to an elderly French merchant at New York, M. Malibran, who soon afterwards went to prison for debt. She believed herself deceived, gave up her marriage settlement to his creditors, and returned to Europe, where in 1836, at Paris, she obtained a divorce which set her free to marry again—which she did at once. In six months afterwards, she was dead; and in two months more died her first husband. Her labours, and the wearing kind of toil consequent upon fame, had long been undermining her strength; and at the Manchester Musical Festival of September, 1836, she sank, after having thrilled the souls of the audience with her last strain, "Sing ye to the Lord." Her voice, and the mind that it carried, thrills yet, and ever will, in the hearts of those who heard her most worthily: and the youngest of these will boast of her to their grand-children as old men now magnify the Siddons and (in the dearth of opera) the Catalani of their day.

RICHARD SHARP.

When a man of business is a man of letters and finds himself equally at home in London drawing-rooms and in the counting-house, he contributes a large portion to the respectability of his country, where such an union of pursuits is not so common as it ought to be. Richard Sharp, commonly known as Conversation Sharp, was a man of this order. He was partly occupied with commercial concerns, and left behind him upwards of £250,000: yet Sir James Mackintosh declared him the best critic he had ever known. He published Letters and Essays which justified his position as a man of letters; he had a seat in parliament for several years, and was the associate of the most eminent literary men of his time. He died, in old age, in 1835.—Alexander Chalmers died at this time—the indefatigable editor of a host of works, and writer of the greater part of the Biographical Dictionary which goes by his name. He is remarkable for literary industry rather than for any other merit in his contributions to literature.—A quiet, modest, but most eminent public benefactor who died at this time was Robert Lemon, of the State Paper Office. Every body knows how, in rummaging among dusty and neglected papers, he found Milton's MS.: but few know how much else he found among the cobwebs. To his industry and sagacity we owe the rescue from rot and oblivion of a mass of valuable materials for history; and also such a reform of our care of State papers as may save us from quenching the historical lights for which we are answerable to future generations. The India Company was at one time very near purchasing the services of Mr. Lemon from the State Paper Office; but Lord Sidmouth, made aware of his value by his superiors in office, increased his salary to an amount on which he might live decently: and perhaps the future Histories of England may be of a far higher, and those of British India of a somewhat lower character, for this appropriation of £200 per annum. It was Mr. Lemon's labours that suggested to Sir R. Peel the

ALEXANDER CHALMERS.

ROBERT LEMON.

appointment of Commissioners to examine and publish such State Papers as were lying neglected; and Mr. Lemon was the Secretary of the Commission thus obtained. The first publications were of the documents of the reign of Henry VIII.—**Sir Wm. Gell.** Sir William Gell, the classical antiquary, who opened to us so much topographical illustration of ancient historical scenes or fictions, died in 1836, at Naples.

Death swept away, during this period, a whole group of distinguished orientalists. **Dr. Carey.** Dr. Carey, the Missionary, died in 1834, at Serampore; and a few weeks after him, **Dr. Morrison.** Dr. Morrison the eminent Chinese scholar at Canton. The lapse of time lessens our confidence in the results of missions to the East, and of negotiations with oriental powers, by revealing more and more of the difficulty of rapidly acquiring the oriental languages so as to be able to employ them in such serious affairs as the uprooting of old religions, and the negotiation of political or commercial alliances. It is now well known to many that shocking errors have existed throughout in our translations of the Scriptures into eastern languages, and that it is difficult for a missionary preacher to utter a discourse without conveying something that it would make his hair stand on end to be aware of: and it is well known that miserable misunderstandings from English blunders about Chinese proclamations precipitated, if they did not cause, the Chinese war. When, therefore, we read of Dr. Carey's success in giving the Scriptures to forty nations or tribes, each in their own tongue, we may well doubt how far they really were the Christian Scriptures that were given them; and, in the case of Dr. Morrison's catechisms and tracts, how far his ideas could be communicated to the Chinese. But beginnings must be made. The zeal and benevolence of both men were unquestionable; and their learning was no doubt as reliable as the times permitted, and certainly greater than that of any other men known among us. One important part of their work was the establishment of colleges and other institutions, by which preparation is made for a more real and less dangerous intercourse with the oriental mind hereafter. Dr. Carey reached an advanced age. Dr. Morrison died in his 53rd year, from the consequences of exposure on the Canton river, while acting as interpreter to Lord Napier amidst the disastrous transactions which will have to be presently related.—**Sir C. Wilkins.** Sir Charles Wilkins was one of the first English students of Sanskrit: and he it was who originated our Bengalee and Persian publications by his ingenuity and skill in preparing the requisite types, with his own hands. This was in the last century, for he was 85 when he died in London, in 1836.—**Wm. Marsden.** His son-in-law, Mr. Marsden, also a great orientalist, followed in the next year, leaving us much new knowledge about Sumatra and the Malayan Archipelago, several dictionaries and grammars of eastern languages, and a singular collection of oriental coins, which he presented to the British Museum. He was but little younger than his father-in-law, having attained the age of 81. He presented his noble library to King's College, London; and resigned, because he did not want it, his rewarding pension of £1500 a year. This was an honourable life of industry, usefulness, and disinterestedness.—The most eminent Chinese scholar left after these losses, **Thos. Manning.** Thomas Manning, departed also, in 1840. The mystery which hung about China when he was young, so completely took possession of his imagination, that he could attend to nothing at home but the studies which might fit him for exploring the forbidden land. He qualified himself as highly as was then possible, went out to the east, and tried long and often, and always in vain, to penetrate China, either by Canton or through Thibet. He got in at last, in the train of Lord Amherst, in 1816. His first publication, when he was quite young, was on algebra; and he would have been eminent as a mathematician, if China had not come in the way. The readers of Charles Lamb's letters know how jealous he was of the China — the unrepaying China—which deprived him of Manning's society for so many of the best years of their lives.

CHARLES LAMB.

Charles Lamb had already been some time gone when Manning died. That gentle genius, heroic and genial, enjoying and suffering, at once—sportful and enduring—noble and frail—loving others as an angel might, and himself beloved as an infant and a sage in one—departed while he could yet ill be spared, before he had passed his 60th year. He was one who could never, at any age, have been willingly spared while his mind could work and play, and his hesitating speech could convey its burden of thought, and pathos, and wild wit: but his special work in life—the guardianship of his accomplished, but infirm and dependent sister—was not done when an accident—a fall whose consequences were fatal—disposed of the matter, and gave a new tenderness to the pathos, and a solemnity to the wit, of the Essays of Elia, which had been read before under a hope that, while Elia lived, we might have more. Charles Lamb was an exquisite ornament of his time—as he would have been of any time: and he was its serious benefactor too, in as far as he called out and fostered the spirit of geniality, in which, above every thing, our time is deficient. There seems to be a prevalent impression that he was of greater mark than his writings will account for; and this is probably owing to the spirit of those writings being far higher than their pretensions;—that they were so instinct with genius, that their form, and even their amount, is a matter of little concern.—An aged lady died in 1838, whose name should not be omitted, though it belongs only to the lightest order of literature, and had long lost the great distinction it had once enjoyed;—Mrs. Grant, of Laggan. Her Memoirs of an American Lady were interesting before the United States were as familiar to us as they are now; and her Letters from the Mountains are a good example of the epistolary style in literature. She lived to feel extreme surprise at the American colonists for daring to desire a separation from England, and at the seditious tendencies of English society which could countenance the presumption. She lived, as was natural, in the scenes of her youth, as regarded both America and Scotland, and her readers dwelt upon the achievements of her youth, in acknowledging their obligations to her. She was 84 when she died.

MRS. GRANT.

JOHN GALT.

Her countryman, John Galt, was, like herself, a highly popular writer in his day, and, like her, could not reconcile himself to the state of things on the other side the Atlantic. He lived for some time in Canada, but was involved in such disputes as he was too apt to find grow up about him; and he is most pleasantly remembered by his Scotch novels—the Ayrshire Legatees, the Annals of the Parish, the Entail, and others. He died in 1839.—The Irish novelist, Gerald Griffin, died in the next year—young, but having ceased to write

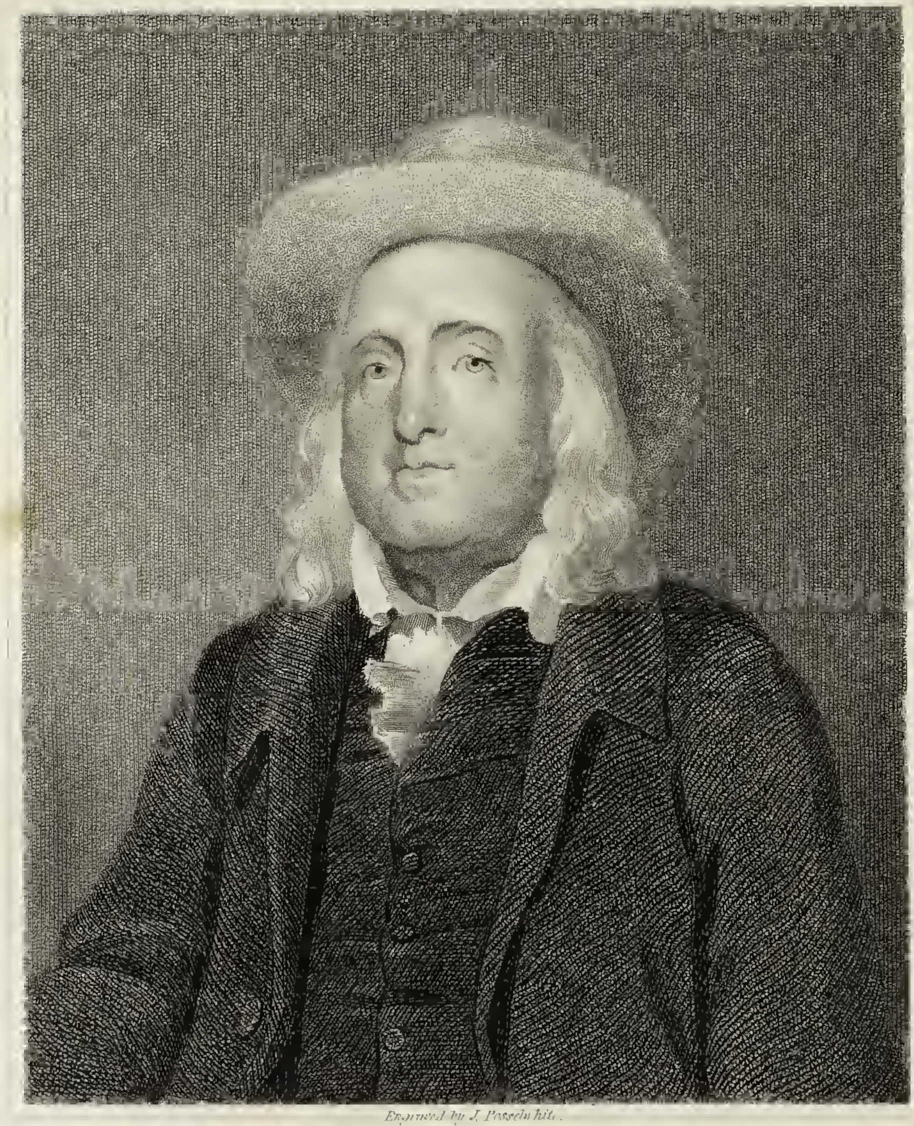
GERALD GRIFFIN.

novels. After giving us the Collegians, and Tales of the Munster Festivals, he retired to a monastery, and devoted himself to religious observances for the short remainder of his days.—In the same year went the most popular of female novelists, however we may wonder at the fact. Fanny Burney happened to reach her prime at that period of the last century when conventionalism had touched its last limit of excess. She was herself full of life, and of what would have been naturalness at any other time than that in which she lived. She was too full of vigour and ability to be silent; and the result is, that she has given us full and faithful pictures of the conventional life which to her appeared natural. It is now scarcely possible to read her Evelina and Cecilia, with all their elaborate delicate distresses, which could never have happened to ingenuous people, and which a breath of good sense and sincerity would at any time blow away in a moment: but the enthusiasm about these novels in their day proves that they were true to their time, and that they ought so far to have value with us. In her youth, Fanny Burney was evidently charming—with her heart, and her wit, and the touch of the hoyden mixing curiously with her innocent and conscientious prudery. But, at last, her fame was too much for her. It led her into the service of royalty, which is not a natural consequence of literary fame; and she was not suited to the position, nor the position to her. The artificial part of her character overgrew the natural; and her later writings are unreadable from their affectations. Her precious heart must have become sadly impoverished before she could employ herself, as she did in her latter days, in revising for the press the affectionate family and friendly letters which had passed between herself and persons long dead, and in arranging, while on the very verge of the grave in which we look to bury our vanities, the records of the interminable and extravagant compliments paid to her half a century before, by kind-hearted great men, whose follies of the moment should have perished with the moment. We owe to her, however, in these Memoirs, gratitude for a great service. Her gossiping volumes are full of interest, of unconscious revelations of herself, far more charming than all her consciousness, and of historical material, from her familiarity with the Court, and with most of the eminent persons of her day. Miss Burney married, at forty, an emigrant artillery officer, being sure at any time of large sums of money for any novel she chose to write, and actually receiving 5000 guineas for the first she wrote after her marriage—Camilla. She survived her husband and only son, and died in her 88th year.

Mme. D'Arblay.

Mrs. Hemans and Miss Landon.

Two popular female poets departed untimely during this period;—Mrs. Hemans, who was in her 42nd year; and Miss Landon, known in the world of letters as L. E. L. Mrs. Hemans died in Dublin, in 1835, after a long illness, and after a separation of many years from her husband, who left chiefly to her the charge of their five sons.—Miss Landon married, and went out to Cape Coast—somewhat wilfully, but under a sense of duty, and died there suddenly, a few weeks after her arrival at the Castle—as was supposed, by taking an over-dose of some deleterious medicine. A more mournful story than hers is seldom heard—illustrative as it is of the perils, snares, and sufferings of a literary life, where the responsibility of the vocation is not felt with the seriousness which shames cupidity, and silences flattery. People inferior to



Engraved by J. Posselwhite.

BENTHAM

From an original Picture by J. Watts
[illegible] Esq. [illegible]

herself made money and amusement out of her talent and herself; and she permitted them to do it—partly out of careless generosity, and partly because she was too little aware of the responsibility of genius. Carefully cultivated, her genius might have accomplished great things. As it was, her early and wonderful facility is nearly all that remains for admiration. By her personal friends she is remembered with an affection which has nothing to do with her writings; and by those who did not know her, her writings are regarded with an indifference almost as great as her own.—Mrs. Hemans's poetry was of a far higher order. It was deformed by a mannerism of that degree which is fatal to permanence of popularity; and there is not much substance of thought. But the sentiment is commonly as true and natural as the expression of it is otherwise; and of a depth which always ensures its freshness. The substantial power of Mrs. Hemans is, perhaps, best shown in her choice of the subjects of her smaller pieces, which is so rich in suggestion, and so full of the keen and sagacious apprehension that belongs to genius, that it is almost a greater treat to look over the table of contents of her minor poems, than to read the poems themselves. Her fame—a genuine and reasonable fame, depending upon her qualities, and not upon any accident of the time—had spread widely over the European and American continents, many years before her death; and there are thousands living to whom the slightest casual recollection of some of her poems will be, to the day of their death, like the singing of a dirge in the recesses of their hearts.—Thomas Haynes Bayly, whose songs were sung in the streets, and who was therefore a public benefactor, died, in his 42nd year, in 1839: and, in full age, Hogg, the Ettrick Shepherd—a man of stubborn purpose and graceful imagination—of unscrupulous manners and delicate sentiment;—a man who taught himself to write with such labour, that he began his task by taking off his coat and waistcoat, but who produced his songs with such facility, that they seem to have presented themselves to him like a group of sun-touches on the prominences of his native valleys and hill-sides. His life was one of painful vicissitudes, from his want of prudence, and of knowledge of the world. The Queen's Wake is the poem which established his fame, and by which he is best remembered: but perhaps a stronger interest attaches to him from his intimacy with Walter Scott, and a far stronger still from the circumstances of his origin and rise in life, to a high place among the authors of his time.

T. HAYNES BAYLY.

JAMES HOGG.

Mr. Lodge, who contributed by his famous Portraits, and other works of antiquarian biography, to future achievements in the department of History, died in 1839, holding the office of Clarenceux king of arms.—Dr. Gillies, who gave us a history of Greece, and translations of much Greek oratory and philosophy, had ceased his labours for many years, and now, in 1836, died in his 90th year.—In the same year, we lost James Mill, best known as the historian of British India, but also celebrated as the chief follower of Bentham, and the author of works on Mental Philosophy and Political Economy. His History of India is the work by which he will be longest and best remembered. He held an office in the India House which afforded him access to a great wealth of materials; and he so wrought his mind into his task as to have strengthened and illuminated his narrative with principles of legislation, and views of social organization which give his work a value that nothing can supersede. We

EDMUND LODGE.

DR. GILLIES.

JAMES MILL.

may and must have others, written by men who have seen India, and who can contribute much that did not lie in Mr. Mill's way: but nothing can now prevent his being the History which first presented the great subject of India to the best part of the mind of England, and largely influenced the administration of that great dependency. It is a well-known virtue of the India Company that they discover, and employ, and reward, the best men, in a way that administrative bodies very rarely do. In this case, as in others, their generous prudence was richly rewarded: for Mr. Mill was able to do more for their empire than they, with all power and willingness, could do for him.

Mr. Malthus.

A man of great celebrity died at the close of 1834—of a celebrity out of all proportion to the knowledge of his works. Mr. Malthus was perhaps the most abused man of his time; but he was so well aware that the abuse never proceeded from those who had read his writings, that it did not trouble him, nor in the least impair the sweetness of his temper, or the quiet cheerfulness of his manners. It was he who first placed clearly and by elaborate statement before society the all-important fact which lies at the bottom of the poverty of society—that the number of consumers naturally presses upon the means of subsistence; and that while the numbers and the means of subsistence are not proportioned to each other by the exercise of enlightened prudence, poverty and misery must always exist. The illustration of the doctrine is simply this: that a piece of land which will exactly support a family of four or five persons will not support the spreading families of those four or five persons; and the moral inference from this is, that forethought ought to be exercised about the future subsistence of such families, or their numbers will be reduced by hunger or disease. Any illustrations or amplifications of these simple facts which may be found in Mr. Malthus's works, and which may be misunderstood or disliked, cannot impair the great service he rendered in pointing out the fact which lies at the bottom of social destitution; nor can any discoveries or recognition of means of increasing food by improving the productiveness of land at home, or drawing from a larger area abroad, touch his theory more or less. Whatever blessings, whatever intermissions of anxiety, we may obtain by such methods, the fact remains that human families expand in numbers while corn-fields do not expand in size, nor, by any means discovered or conceivable, in a productiveness which can keep pace with human increase. Mr. Malthus's simple humanity was shown in the readiness and plainness with which he made known this essential truth. The hardness and cruelty would have been in concealing it after it once became apparent to his mind. As for the foolish and disagreeable notions which are too commonly associated with his name and theory—such as that he desired that poor people should not marry—they may be regarded as mere unfounded imputations, cast upon his works by careless rumour; in spreading which, however, those are not guiltless who have the opportunity of seeing for themselves what Malthus did think and say. His works will probably be little read henceforth; for the first and chief, his Essay on Population, has answered its purpose. All who turn their thoughts towards political economy at all are aware that a determinate stock of food which is just sufficient for a certain number must be insufficient for any greater number;

and that, while we have among us so much destitution as we see, it must be a consideration of the first moment so to educate the rising generation, and so to arrange the inducements of their life, as to train them to prudence for their own comfort, and humanity towards their children. The service which Mr. Malthus did to society was in fixing its attention upon the laws of increase of eaters and of food, and on the morality — a cheerful and genial morality, opposed only to license—which is indicated by those natural laws. Mr. Malthus was a clergyman, and professor of History and Political Economy at the East India College at Haileybury. His life was useful and innocent, serene and cheerful—supported and graced by universal respect and love among those who knew him. He reached his 69th year.

William Godwin.

An old antagonist of his — a man who was in a state of antagonism to much that is in the world—William Godwin — died in April, 1836. Godwin was a man of great powers, insufficiently balanced; and, as the European world was, in his youth, a mighty conflict of great powers insufficiently balanced, he was just the man to make an impression of vast force on the society of his day. Soon after his Political Justice was published, working men were seen to club their earnings to buy it, and to meet under a tree or in an alehouse to read it. It wrought so violently that Godwin saw there must be unsoundness in it; and he modified it considerably before he reissued it. His mind was acute, and, through the generosity of his heart, profound; but it was one-sided. With us, society and government had been one-sided in the opposite direction, and it was a benefit to us all that, when driven from the purely conventional view of things, society fell in with a Godwin who presented, in the broadest manner, the natural. He suffered, individually, from the antagonism, and so did many of his disciples; but it was the safest thing for society at large, in that crisis, to have the whole material of social philosophy, the whole choice of social organization, exhibited before it at once. There can be no doubt that government and society in England at this day are the better for the astuteness and the audacity, the truth and the error, the depth and the shallows, the generosity and the injustice, of Godwin, as manifested in his Political Justice: and thus he was one—though perhaps the most unpalatable—of the benefactors of his age. Many who do not regard him from this point of view are grateful for his wonderful novels—Caleb Williams and St. Leon. These are but a small portion of his works; but they are those by which he is best known. He controverted Malthus—he wrote a History of the Commonwealth, and a series of historical books for children; and in short was busy with his pen through the greater part of a long life. He was the husband of Mary Wollstonecraft, whom he lost a few months after their marriage. In his old age, a small sinecure office was given him by the Grey Ministry, with rooms in connexion with the House of Commons; and there he loved to show the old Star Chamber which was so soon to be destroyed before his face; and to exhibit the tallies, the burning of which was to occasion the destruction. On the night of the fire, he was at the theatre; and, when it became clear that his chambers were in danger, his strong-minded old wife would not have him alarmed by a message, but

1835—41. managed to remove his property before he returned to be amazed at the sight. He was saved the worst part of the shock, and lived for nearly a year and a half afterwards, when he quietly sank out of the life he loved so well, in the 81st year of his age.

The interests of the period now closing were so various, so widely spread, and, through the weakness of the government, so desultory, that it has been a task of no slight difficulty to bring them together, and present them in any effectual sequence and natural connexion. We have now before us the closing period of this History, in which the events seem to draw together in their very magnitude, and to prescribe their own order, which will be interrupted only by some necessary retrospect here and there.

END OF BOOK V.

BOOK VI.

CHAPTER I.

1841.

General Election.

THE general election of 1841 was one of extraordinary importance. It was not that any one great question was now, as in 1831, to be settled by a House of Commons which should be, in fact, an assemblage of delegates: but that something yet more important should be done. The Ministers hoped, and apparently believed, that the country would support them on the Free-trade question as it had done on the Parliamentary Reform question; and they calculated on beginning a new career in virtue of their proposal of a fixed duty on Corn. But in this they were three times mistaken. The people were not yet ready for such a struggle on this question as they had gone through ten years before for a greater:—if they had been ready, the Free-traders could not have carried their point under those oppressive provisions of the Reform bill which secured the preponderance of the landed interest in the representation:—and again, they had not that confidence in the government which could stimulate them to any effectual effort on behalf of the government proposition. Nothing had happened for some years to give them any confidence in the Whig administration; and much had happened every year to prevent their trusting Lord Melbourne and his colleagues with the subject of the Corn laws. The Ministers who carried the Reform Bill had advocated Parliamentary Reform for a long course of years—had seen the truth, and spoken for it, and were fit to act in its behalf when the season came: but the men who now assumed to be reformers on the Corn question had, both in and out of office, steadily resisted this very reform, while in possession of precisely the same means of information which they had at present. The Premier had pronounced the proposal of Corn law reform mad: and Lord J. Russell had called it mischievous, absurd, impracticable, and unnecessary. He had resisted such proposals ever since he came into office—at first contemptuously, and then vehemently: and when he, at last and somewhat suddenly, declared himself in favour of a moderate Fixed Duty, he had no right to expect the support of the nation. The Ministers had no right even to resent popular doubts of their sincerity: but there were thousands who declined entering upon the inquiry as to the sincerity of Ministers who yet positively denied their trustworthiness. The question was too important to be committed to the management of men who had, for nine out of ten years of office, acted strongly on the wrong

1841. side: and who had, for several sessions past, shown that they could not conduct any important business whatever. The Corn law question was not therefore that on which the elections proceeded, on the whole, though the Conservatives and the immediate adherents of the Whig government agreed in putting it forward as the ground of their conflict. The government candidates shouted forth Lord J. Russell's fixed duty as their election cry; but they met with little response from the people. The people at large felt that a more important consideration than even Corn law Reform was pressing.

The more sagacious and better educated among them put their conviction into words; but many thousands felt and acted upon the conviction who could not put it into words. They felt that the very heart of our political virtue and honour was eaten out by the incompetence, moral and official, of the Whig administration. During their protracted decline in power, in reputation, and in character, they had dragged down with them the aspiration, the earnestness, and the hope, of the people: and the political deterioration must be endured no longer. Not only had parliamentary reform become almost a cant term under their ineffectual and unprincipled rule; but the very virtue which had achieved that reform was starved out by the same sponsors who had offered themselves before the congregation of the world to cherish it. The indifferent had, under Whig rule, become more indifferent; the sceptical, more doubting; the timid, more disheartened; the earnest, more angry from year to year, till they were now exasperated into an opposition as fierce as could be offered by the most antiquated or selfish of the landed interest. It would be no small gain, in displacing the Whigs, to be relieved about the transaction of the daily business of the nation—to know that the government was in the hands of men who could prepare acts of parliament, and obtain accurate information, and procure good servants, to do their work without blunders and delay. It would be a yet greater gain to obtain relief of mind about our financial affairs—to feel that the money matters of the State were in able hands, and that the immoral and destructive process was stopped of sinking deeper into debt every year, finding the annual deficit in no degree repaired, but only met by loans, and covered over with explanations, and smiles and promises. Greater still would be the gain of having any set of men in power who would cause political action in the people. There was no apprehension that the old Tory rule would ever be revived. From the day when the Duke of Wellington and Sir R. Peel had stood forth as reformers in any department of principle, all possibility of rank Tory rule was over. The question now was only of degrees and modes of reform; and if men of any party were once in place who had any power to govern, and any political honour to guard, the people might and must co-operate with them, either in the way of support or opposition; and that political life would revive within the heart of the nation which had well nigh died out under the chill of hopelessness on the one part, and the poison of contempt on the other. The extraordinary importance of the elections of 1841 lay—not in any pretence of settling the Corn question—but in the opportunity afforded of dislodging the tenacious tenants of the public offices. Notices to quit had been in vain; and twice had the day of reckoning been got over by an exercise of royal favour.

Now the time was come for taking off the roof, if the people so pleased. They did so please; and very thoroughly they did the work.

Throughout the elections, the support of the government was made a Confidence question. Fatal as was this method of appeal, the Whig government had no other. And it was on the ground of promises only that they could ask for confidence. The appeal on the ground of their services in carrying Parliamentary Reform had been so long worn out that the elections of 1837 had been carried by the free use of the Queen's name; and nothing had happened since to justify an appeal to any thing in the past. They now asked for confidence on the ground of what they intended to do: but this is an appeal ill-becoming any Ministry at the end of ten years (almost uninterrupted) of power; and it was wholly inadmissible from an Administration which had once assumed the title of Reforming, but had long since fallen back under its old title of Whig. The people refused the great Confidence vote on their wide floor within the four seas; and prepared for the refusal of the smaller Confidence vote which was to be asked for within the four walls of their House of Parliament.

Lord J. Russell stood for the City of London, and was returned by a majority of only 7 over the fifth candidate, who was a Conservative. Two Conservatives and one Liberal were above him on the poll. Some mirth was excited by the zeal of certain of the government party who commemorated this victory, as they called it—though two Conservatives were let in—by a medal, showing on its reverse side a wreath of wheat-ears, and the motto "Free Trade," with the additional words "per mare per terram," which were translated "one foot on sea and another on shore," ("to one thing constant never.") The few victories of this kind gained by the Ministers were as fatal as their defeats; for they could not afford to have their great towns neutralized while the counties were returning Conservatives in overwhelming numbers. Lord Howick was rejected in Northumberland, and Lords Morpeth and Milton by the West Riding of Yorkshire. While free-trade professions were vague and faint, declarations of want of confidence were loud and clear in some of the largest towns. Complaints — no doubt just —were made on every hand, of corruption: and it was believed that such an amount of bribery had seldom, if ever before, been known; but no one could say that the one party was more guilty than the other. It was alleged, and truly, that the Conservatives had been more attentive to the registration than the Reformers; and this was one of the most mortifying tokens of the popular indifference to the Whig government. The result was, a Whig majority of 9 in Scotland, and 19 in Ireland; and a Conservative majority of 104 in England and Wales. In the elections of 1837, the government majority had fallen to 16, according to some authorities; 12, according to others. Now, the government was in a minority of 76; and this great Conservative majority was sure to be largely increased, as soon as power should pass from the Whigs to the Opposition—there being always in parliament a considerable body of men disposed to support the government, whatever it may be.

Spectator, 1841. 686.

Annual Register, 1841, p. 147.

The end was known to be near. The Queen and her Household had learned their part in the ensuing changes by painful experience. The ladies

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prepared to resign their offices in good time, and the Queen prepared herself to accept their resignation without objection. The new parliament assembled on the 19th of August, Lord J. Russell and Sir R. Peel meeting at the bar, and shaking hands "very cordially." Mr. Lefevre was re-chosen Speaker with the smoothest unanimity: and then every body waited for the royal Speech. Next, there was much comment on the Speech being delivered by commission, while the Queen was in good health, the weather fine, and her Majesty known to be usually disposed to enjoy these public occasions. It was alleged that the Queen's physician had advised her Majesty to stay at home; and this again fixed expectation on the Speech. It was natural that the sovereign should feel some emotion on meeting a parliament elected for the very purpose of overthrowing an Administration to which she was attached by all the associations of her accession to the throne, and by ties of confidence and custom: but further reasons for her absence appeared when the Speech was read. It was singularly controversial in its tone, and was therefore far from being the kind of Address which it suited the dignity of a Sovereign, or her relations with her parliament, to deliver by word of mouth. Not only were the Lords and Gentlemen in parliament requested to consider the Corn laws, but they were to determine whether those laws did not produce this and that and the other bad consequence. It is inconceivable that the Ministers should not have foreseen the embarrassment in which they would have placed their Royal Mistress, if parliament should "determine" that the Corn laws did not produce these bad consequences; a determination far more probable than an agreement of the majority of this particular parliament with the opinion of the Queen. This singularity in the Speech pointed to the necessity of a dissolution of this parliament, unless the existing Ministry should be displaced before any debate on the Corn laws came on: and it rendered indispensable a protest on the part of certain members against the unconstitutional aspect given to the Speech by the sovereign being brought forward to make the first move in a great controversy. A few nights afterwards, Lord J. Russell was so appealed to by Lord Stanley as to be forced to an earnest declaration that the Speech expressed the sentiments of the Ministers, and that they alone were responsible for any thing that it contained.

New Parliament. Hansard, lix. 8. Queen's Speech. Hansard, lix. 16. Hansard, lix. 453.

The Address Amended.

The Address was moved in the Upper House by Lord Spencer and seconded by Lord Clanricarde; and both speakers openly and at length condemned the existing Corn laws. It was impossible to enter into controversy on this point in preparing an answer to the Speech in which the Sovereign's opinion appeared to be declared: and the amendment moved by Lord Ripon therefore took another ground. It expressed the alarm of parliament at the continued excess of expenditure over income—promised careful consideration of the interests commended to them—but declared that nothing could be done while the government did not possess the confidence of the House or of the country, and that her Majesty's present Ministers did not possess that confidence. This amendment was carried by a majority of 72 on the night of the 24th of August. A similar amendment to the Address in the Commons was proposed by Mr. Stuart Wortley, who had succeeded Lord Morpeth in the representation of the West Riding of Yorkshire: and it was carried by a

Hansard, lix. 106.

majority of 91. The last acts of the Whig government deepened their unpopularity with their best remaining supporters—those who had yet hoped to carry some goodly measure of free trade by their means. These were displeased that the Corn law question should have been so mixed up with the personal interests of the Ministers as to share in their personal discredit. They, however, voted in favour of the Ministerial Address, for the sake of the free trade principle. Yet was the majority against Ministers in both Houses as overwhelming as has been seen. It only remained for the Sovereign to communicate her Reply, and for the Ministers to resign. The Reply was dignified. The Queen expressed her satisfaction at the spirit in which Parliament proposed to deliberate on the matters she had recommended to them, and declared, in conclusion, "Ever anxious to listen to the advice of my Parliament, I will take immediate measures for the formation of a new Administration." This message reached the Commons on Monday, August 30th: and on Thursday, September 2nd, the Queen spent her last evening with the Household whom she had declared to be so dear to her. Scarcely a word was spoken at the dinner table; and when she was with her ladies afterwards, tears and regrets broke forth with little restraint. They were natural and amiable. It was no fault of hers—nor of theirs—that their connexion was made dependent on the state of political parties. The blame rested elsewhere, though the suffering was with them. Every body pitied the young sovereign, and saw and felt the hardship; but there were many who looked forward cheerfully to an approaching time when she would know a new satisfaction in reposing upon an Administration really strong, efficient, and supported by the country, and on a Household composed of persons among whom she could make friends, without the fear of their removal from any other cause than her wish or their own.

Hansard, lix. 449.

Hansard, lix. 476.

QUEEN'S HOUSEHOLD CHANGED.

On the night of Monday, August 30th, Lord Melbourne in the one House, and Lord J. Russell in the other, declared that, in consequence of the votes of both Houses on the Address, the Ministers had resigned their offices, and now continued in their places only till their successors should be appointed.

Hansard, lix. 473. 476.

RESIGNATION OF MINISTERS.

Thus was the Melbourne Administration out at last. Men had waited long, if not patiently, for this issue; and the general satisfaction was evident enough. Perhaps it was worth waiting so long to see the exhaustion so complete. It afforded every needful advantage to the incoming administration: and it yielded a striking lesson to all governments and their constituents. No government had a fairer chance than that of the Whigs from popular and royal favour—no government had a clearer task to perform, or more aids and supports and stimulus in the performance; and, when it became apparent where the want of strength and clearness lay—that their principles were weak, their views obscure, their purposes fluctuating, their knowledge deficient, and their political honour relaxed—no ministry of such popular promise ever sank so low. It was well for the political morality of the country that the case was so clear—made so clear at last by the suicidal appeal to the country in the elections. This clear exposition of the case might afford some reparation—the only reparation possible—for the mischief of a long retention

1841. of office by men who could not, with all means of power in their hands, govern the country. The people, who had for years been divided between apathy and fretfulness under a tenacious but helpless administration, might now hope to enjoy the repose of confidence in the midst of activity in obtaining reforms. They would now have able men, in an united Cabinet, to deal with; and it would depend much on themselves what the direction should be that the ability of the Ministry should take. If the Peel Cabinet should prove a reforming one, that would be the best thing that could happen. It it should prove still too conservative, there was now a fair field of Opposition open, in which the political life of the country could exercise itself, and ascertain how much energy it could still command.

CHAPTER II.

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NEW ADMINISTRATION.

THE distribution of office was watched with great eagerness by the whole country. The first great hope was, that Sir Robert Peel would unite the offices of First Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer. The most pressing evil was the state of our finances. The people were becoming fretted and alarmed at the annual deficit, for the cure of which no vigorous measures were taken: and the distress had now, for a long time, been such as to pull down the national courage, and press the working classes into depths of hopelessness. If any power could redeem us from this distress and debt, it was Peel; for we had no other such financier. There was some regret, therefore, when it was known that Mr. Goulburn was made Chancellor of the Exchequer; but still it was considered certain that Peel's mind would preside in that department, and that all its action would proceed upon his views.

LORD ABERDEEN.

The next most interesting point was, who was to be Foreign Secretary, and who at the Board of Control. Next to retrieving our affairs at home, was the consideration of keeping the peace in Europe and America, and returning to a state of peace in Asia. Our accord with the United States was in peril from Boundary questions which we shall have to review, and from the Right-of-Search question, which threatened also to embroil us with powers nearer home. Our "good understanding" with France was far from being what it was; and the Right of Search, and some Spanish difficulties, made our peace with the French very precarious; while the sagacious saw that the great Continental struggle, so sure to happen, might henceforth begin on any occasion of provocation, however slight. And we were now, as will presently be seen, actually at war with China, and suffering under an accumulation of disasters in India. After twenty-six years of peace, we were apparently in imminent danger of war, at a time when every thing was going wrong at home;—when agriculture was moaning with hunger, and manufactures seemed dying, and commerce was well nigh bankrupt; when Ireland was stirring in rebellion, and the working classes in England and Scotland were growing desperate, and debt was stealing upon us, and the nerves of the stoutest were beginning to be shaken, from the young Sovereign in her palace, to the field-labourer in his damp hovel, and the gaunt weaver chafing beside his empty loom. It was no time for war; and great was the importance of appointing men in connexion with foreign affairs, and with the India House, who should be trustworthy for prudence and a quiet demeanour, and averse from meddling and noise, showing their sense of their country's dignity and honour by taking them for granted, and relying upon them. Lord Ellenborough was at the Board of Control; and people thought this a very doubtful appointment. It did not mend the matter that he soon went out to India as Governor-General. It was impossible to suppose him the right man for such offices at such a time. The appointment

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of Lord Aberdeen as Foreign Secretary was more fortunate. It was soon evident that the honour of England and her peace with the world were safe in his hands. "It seems strange," observed an eminent American statesman to an English traveller, "that we Republicans should be glad when your Tories come into power. One would think that our sympathies should be with your reform governments. But the truth is, we cannot get on with your Whig ministers. They do not understand business, and they do not understand official good manners. Your Tory ministers are able, and attentive, and courteous; and when we do not agree, we are not likely to quarrel. But with the Whigs, we have to forbear, and nothing goes smoothly." This feeling being shared by other governments, the chances of peace were much improved by the retirement of an unpopular Foreign Minister, and the appearance in his stead of one of such weight of character, and quiet dignity of temper, as Lord Aberdeen.—Another thoroughly satisfactory appointment was that of Sir James Graham as Home Secretary. His quality had been proved by the good work he had done at the Admiralty.—Lord Ripon was not thought strong enough for his post at the Board of Trade.—Lord Stanley was unhappily made Colonial Minister;—an office for which superhuman powers and angelic attributes of temper are requisite; and in which his superficial cleverness, and his insolent and irritable temper, might work more mischief in five years than a century could cure.—Another objectionable appointment was that of the Duke of Buckingham to be Lord Privy Seal: but the displeasure at this was soon put an end to by the Duke's retirement from office, on his discovery that he was a member of a reforming administration.—Another who had no business in such a ministry, was Sir Edward Knatchbull: but he was only Paymaster of the Forces, and Naval Treasurer, and not a man of any ability; so that his power for mischief was small.—Lord Lyndhurst was, of course, Lord Chancellor.—Lord Wharncliffe, President of the Council, perhaps, proved as agreeable a surprise to the nation as any one of his colleagues. Amidst some old Tory tendencies to regard office too much as a personal and family privilege, and too little as a trust, he manifested throughout his term of occupancy, such an earnest desire for the promotion of popular education, such liberality of views, such sagacity and diligence in business, as made him one of the most valued members of the government.

Sir J. Graham.

Lord Stanley.

Lord Wharncliffe.

Out of the Cabinet, the most notable man was, perhaps, Mr. W. E. Gladstone, who was Vice-President of the Board of Trade, and Master of the Mint. The character of his mind was not very clearly understood; and the prevalent doubt was whether he understood it himself; but enough was known of his seriousness, his thoughtfulness, and his conscientiousness, to cause him to be regarded with emphatic respect and hope, at a time when earnest men were to be prized above all others. Some other young men came into minor offices, from whom much was expected by the few who already knew them—as Lord Lincoln, heir of the Duke of Newcastle, and the Hon. Sidney Herbert;—Lord Lincoln going to the Woods and Forests department, and Mr. Sidney Herbert being Secretary to the Admiralty. Lord Lowther was Postmaster-General; Lord G. Somerset, Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster,—and Sir George Murray, Master-General of the Ordnance.

Mr. Gladstone.

The day after the mournful dining of the Court, when the Queen and her

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Household were about to part—to undergo a separation far more complete than would have been necessary if they had not been at once near relations of the late Ministers and her Majesty's domestic companions — the Queen had to go through much painful business. On that Friday morning, Sept. 3, crowds thronged the approaches of Claremont, where the Court was staying. It was not like an ordinary change of Ministry. The exhaustion of the Whigs was so complete, that men knew that a former period of national history was closing, and another coming in: and the crowd was on the watch, that grey autumnal morning, not only for the old Ministers and the new, but for every incident which might be construed as an omen.—The old Ministers drove up first—in plain clothes—were admitted to the royal presence, and delivered up the seals of office. Meantime, the new Ministers arrived, in Court dresses; and "the first sunburst" occurred as Sir R. Peel drove in at the gates. He was warmly cheered, as was the Duke of Wellington; and both looked very well pleased, the people said. When the ex-Ministers departed, Sir R. Peel had audience of the Queen, to kiss hands on his appointment; and after him, the Duke of Wellington, and three or four more. Then the Queen and Prince Albert repaired to the corridor, and held a Privy Council, the Queen declaring Lord Wharncliffe its President. The swearing-in of new members was got over quickly—the whole business, with luncheon, occupying only half an hour. By half-past two, the anxious young Sovereign was left to make domestic acquaintance with her new household, and to miss the familiar friends under whose guidance she had been accustomed to do her share of state business. She was probably little aware how soon she could repose entire confidence in her First Minister, and feel a new kind of ease about the conduct of public affairs.

Times Newspaper, Sept. 3, 1841.

First Nights in Parliament.

The next amusement for observers was seeing the eminent men of the country change places, on the re-assembling of parliament on the 16th of September. The new Ministers had lost no seats in the process of their re-election; and they therefore assembled their whole number. Some of the Liberals went over, and occupied the front benches of Opposition; some seemed at a loss where to place themselves, after having sat in the same seats for ten years, with only a short interval. One or two members, too Radical to belong to any party, would not move, but sat composedly among the Tories.—The next interest for those who saw how serious was our condition, was in hearing the Minister's statement as to how Government meant to proceed.—The Chancellor of the Exchequer must ask a vote of £2,500,000; and he would then state how he proposed temporarily to meet the existing deficiency. At the beginning of the next session, Ministers would declare by what large measures they proposed to rectify the finances of the country, and equalize the revenue and the expenditure; an object of the very first importance in their eyes.—Lord J. Russell made captious and taunting speeches, finding fault with this delay, and calling for an exposition of the government policy in regard to the Corn trade, within a month; and this provoked a retort from the Minister, in the form of a question why the late government had deferred for five years of power a question which they would not now allow a new Ministry five months to consider and mature: and thus it was immediately evident that there was to be parliamentary strife between the late and present leaders in the Commons.

Hansard, lix. 511–516.

Hansard, lix. 517, 529.

Hansard, lix. 542.

1841. It was harrowing to the feelings of men of all parties to hear the statements made of the intense suffering of the operative classes from hunger, and the frequent declarations of their representatives that many of them could not live to learn what measures government would propose for their relief: and to the Minister it must have been wearing to be appealed to, night after night, to declare what he proposed to do for the relief of the starving, and reproached in advance as purposing to keep up the price of food, and to sacrifice the lives of the poor to the purses of the aristocracy. These things seem foolish now—hasty, pettish, and unreasonable: but we must remember that Sir R. Peel and his Cabinet were, as yet, believers in the Sliding-scale; that, while exposing the bad qualities of Lord J. Russell's 8*s*. fixed duty, they had not yet given the slightest intimation that they had any thing better to propose; and that their opponents were truly heart-stricken at the spectacle of the misery of the manufacturing districts; while, from long habit, they regarded the Peel administration as purely aristocratic in its temper and principles. The Premier's replies were uniformly calm and quiet. He would not be forced to any disclosures before his colleagues and he were prepared with their plans. No one could grieve more deeply and sincerely for the distress of the people; but, the deeper that distress, the more careful should government be to avoid rashness in legislation, and in promise. He would not countenance the delusion that it was possible to relieve the popular distress immediately by any parliamentary measure whatever. The only thing that legislation could do was to remove obstruction, to lay the foundation of improvement, and work a gradual amelioration in the condition of society. Those who heard him, and those who read his speeches under the prejudice of his former Toryism, told the people that, having the powers of government in his hand, he now refused to do the first duty of the government—to employ and feed the people. This is worth noting in evidence of the retribution which Sir R. Peel had to undergo for his ancient opinions or party connexions, and of the ignorance in regard to the functions of a representative government which existed, nine years after the passage of the Reform Bill, among a considerable number of the men who had caused that Bill to pass.

Hansard, lix. 1110. The Minister's difficulties were increased by an unfortunate declaration of the Duke of Wellington's in the House of Lords—that there was no deficiency of corn in the country; that the distress had nothing to do with the food question; that it was owing to want of work and of wages, and other causes; but that he never heard how parliament could do any thing in such a case. Probably, no one expected the Duke of Wellington ever to come out as a political economist, or supposed that, at his years, he could be taken in hand as a pupil by Sir R. Peel: but it reflected some discredit on the government, and confirmed certain despairing statements of Opposition members, when so eminent a member of the new government could see no connexion between food and work—food and wages; and no evidence that the food question was concerned in the existing intolerable distress.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer early proposed to provide for the £2,500,000 (nearly) which was required for the public service, by selling stock for the emergency—declaring his dislike of increasing the Debt, and his intention of proposing, in the next session, comprehensive and permanent methods of pro- Hansard, lix. 835.

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vision for the public service. There was much natural repining at any increase of the Debt, and much denunciation of the method, as if the need had been the work of the new government: but the thing was agreed to, because, in fact, nobody saw any thing else that could be done.—The Poor Law Commissioners' powers were renewed for six months, that the relief of pauperism might not stop till the subject of the Poor Law could be reviewed in parliament. The opposition to this brief and indispensable renewal showed how serious a matter the review of the law would be, and indicated that the question of pauperism would be one of the most pressing "difficulties" of this, as of every administration.—These, and some other matters being temporarily arranged, parliament was prorogued by Commission on the 7th of October. The Speech did not, this time, express any opinions on the Corn laws, but declared that the attention of parliament would have to be given, as soon as possible, to the means of equalizing the national income and expenditure, and of providing against the recurrence of the terrible distress which had for long prevailed in the manufacturing districts—a distress for which her Majesty expressed the deepest concern.

PROROGATION.
Hansard, lix. 1154.

The prorogation was to the 11th of November. Meantime, the Speech was a riddle for the politicians and the sufferers of the country to ponder; and the Ministers had enough to do in considering and settling their plans for the retrieval of our affairs in the far East, and about our own doors. The news which arrived from the one and the other region was enough to try the courage of a Wellington, and exhaust the resources of a Peel.

CHAPTER III.

1834—44.

Policy of China.

FOR more than a century past—ever since our relations with India became a matter of popular interest—it has been a subject of speculation or observation why there was so little war in the heart of Asia, among those steppes which, according to all analogy, would be supposed likely to be the scene of constant or ever-renewed warfare. While, in the centre of every other great continent, there are interminable feuds, apparently necessitated by geographical conditions, the interior of Asia, where the same geographical conditions exist, has, for above a century, been as quiet as if it had been a maritime territory. The great table-lands are there, rising shelf above shelf, till it dizzies the imagination to mount the vast stair, from the steaming plains of the Ganges and the Camboja up from height to height of the Himalayas and the Snowy Mountains, finding at the top but little descent on the other side, but again, range above range of table land, still rising till that deep interior is reached which no stranger may penetrate, except some wandering Russian trader, or adventurous pilgrim, who once in a century or two may get in, if he cannot get across. The ordinary and necessary population of such lands is there—the Thibetian and Mongolian; apparently so apt, and once so ready, for war: yet, as we know from the facts of surrounding countries, no warfare has been carried on in those wild regions for above a century.

The reason is that a policy of peace has been the deliberate choice of the empire of China. There is no chance in the matter: if there were, the chances for war would be overwhelming. It is an affair of deliberate choice and fixed principle, in regard to which the whole arrangements of the empire have been made. There is no regular army in China—not because the Chinese are ignorant of armies and war policy, but because they dread a military sovereignty, and military contests for the throne. The statesmen of China are ready to explain, when they can find foreigners able to understand their language, and willing to know their minds, that they abjure conquest for the same reasons which make them avoid danger of a military despotism; because they desire a settled and industrial mode of life for their people, and to restrain the tribes of the interior by an immutable course of policy, rather than by force of arms. This method is partly suggested, and altogether favoured, by the natural defences of the country. If war can be prevented from springing up in the great interior plains, their bounding mountains may keep the empire pretty safe from foreign invasion. All along the vast Siberian frontier, and that of Independent Tartary, and along the northern spurs of the Himalayas, there is a militia—Mandchou, Mongolian, and Thibetian—whose rough organization is of a feudal character, and which serves as a sufficient defence of the empire without any trained army. As for the seaboard—till lately, the Chinese had no foe to contend with but pirates; and their rude vessels are able to cope with that enemy. When the possibility of assaults from Europe and America presented itself to them, they declare that they weighed the comparative merits of two plans; and here again deliberately made their choice—to abide by their peace policy. If they set to work to raise a navy, they must be taught, aided, and officered, by foreigners; and from that moment, both their objects—civil sovereignty and unbroken peace—would be in peril; the other plan was therefore chosen; and, on demand, commercial advantages were granted to Europeans and Americans, as far as this could be done without breach of the exclusive policy of the empire, and only as a less evil than war. In both its aims, the Chinese empire succeeded for a longer period than it is usual to see empires pursue definite aims. There have been no conflicts between the throne and the army, or between the throne and the people, or by the throne and army together against the people, such as have, through all time, ravaged empires in certain stages of civilization. The few divisions of trained soldiery which guard the capital are scattered, as garrisons, among the large towns, are not an army, and could hardly form even the nucleus of one: and where there is no army, there can be no real political relations with any foreign country. The Americans have long understood all this, and have acted upon their knowledge—seeking no political relations with China before the British compelled them to do so, but carrying on a most lucrative trade, and maintaining the most friendly private relations with the Chinese, by means of merchant vessels, without a hint of naval armaments, and through the agency of supercargoes, without any mention of ambassadors.

Pekin Gazette. In the Times, July 26th, 1849.

The principle of Chinese policy may be judged by nations or individuals—it may be admired, excused, criticized, wondered at, pitied, or laughed at: but it *is* a principle—entitled to the respect due to principles wherever they are found. It may be that the immutable policy of China itself must be proved, like all work of men's brains and hands, subject to mutation under the operation of time. It may be that, to Europeans and Americans, such a policy may appear not only blind and weak, but morally indefensible: but not the less is it a very serious thing to explode a system so ancient, so full of purpose, and so energetically preserved. If the exploding process is begun in ignorance and self-interest, and carried on in ignorance and a spirit of scorn, it is a more than serious—it is a sad and solemn matter. This process took place under the successive Whig Administrations, from the formation of the Cabinet of Lord Grey to the dissolution of that of Lord Melbourne: but it was not the Whig Ministers alone who were responsible in the matter. The melancholy ignorance and scorn which led us into what will ever be called the Opium War were shared by the Opposition, and by the great body of the nation. What faults of management there were must be imputed to the Ministers of the day and their supporters in this affair among the Opposition; but if hereafter the Opium War with China appears in the eyes of the historian and the moralist a disgrace, it will be as a national disgrace; for the people put no effectual check upon the government, but rather stimulated its action, by sharing its ignorance and vying with its spirit of scorn. There was scarcely a schoolboy on the American seaboard who could not have justly rebuked our city electors, our newspaper editors, and our statesmen of every party, about our Opium War.

English Ignorance of China.

It is probable that this war would never have taken place if our knowledge of the Chinese had been sufficient to allay our spirit of scorn. The popular English notion of the Chinese seems to have been held by the government, and the agents they sent out, who might have learned better by seeking information from merchants resident many years in the country. The general notion of China was and is, of a country dreadfully over-peopled, so that multitudes are compelled to live in boats, floating about to pick up dead dogs for food: that they are tyrannized over by a Tartar government which they would fain be rid of, and by an aristocracy which will permit no middle class: that they call foreigners "barbarians," and designate Europeans by foul epithets instead of their proper names; and that their sole endeavour in regard to foreigners is to insult and mock them. Merchants of any nation who have lived long enough in the neighbourhood of the Chinese to be qualified to speak of them give a very different account from this. They declare that the government is on the whole favourable to the industry and comfort of the people: that the people are easy and contented: that the rights of property are respected, and that there is a large and wealthy middle class; that literature is the highest pursuit; that the Chinese possess a greater body of literature than Europe can show; and that nothing is known among us of its quality, as it remains wholly unexplored; that the notion of insulting epithets being applied to our agents in lieu of their own names is an utter delusion arising from ignorance of the fact that the Chinese, having no alphabet, are obliged to express new names by the words in their language which approach nearest in sound. Thus, when Lord Napier fired up at being written down "laboriously vile," Mr. Morrison was written down "a polite horse," and another resident at Macao, "a cwt. of hemp." Such misconceptions of Chinese character and condition, together with our bigoted persistance in conducting intercourse with a singular State according to our own customary methods and forms, and not theirs, were a bad preparation for the management of difficulties, if such should arise: and the event was painful and discreditable accordingly.

State of China.

Westminster Review, 1840, p. 282.

The Opium Question.

One of the great branches of the trade of the East India Company was in opium with China: and when the Company's Charter expired in 1834, the trade was vigorously pushed by private merchants, who purchased the article from the Company. The Chinese government had long desired and endeavoured to stop the opium trade, as purely mischievous to the people. Whether the motives of the government were philanthropic or politic—whether it mourned over the popular intemperance in Opium smoking, or feared the effects of a constant and increasing drain of its silver currency, does not affect the question: nor is it of any consequence to us, in regard to the controversy, whether the political economy of the Chinese government in interfering with trade was good or bad. The facts were that all traffic in opium was expressly forbidden; that British merchants nevertheless carried on a profitable commerce in opium—not only smuggling it in as our smugglers bring in brandy and gin, but making a lodgment in the country, for the article and its sale, under shelter of the arrangements for a general trade at Macao and Canton:—that the government was, for a course of years, supine in trusting the enforcements of its prohibition to its provincial authorities; that it roused itself gradually, repeating the prohibition, with warnings more and more emphatic;

that the prohibition and warnings were wholly neglected, and it became necessary to make the matter—or let it be made—a cause of war. As the Colonial Gazette pointed out—it is as if (the growth of tobacco being prohibited in the British Islands) the merchants of France should steal into our county of Kent, establish tobacco-growing, sell the produce freely among our people, and fix an agent at Dover, to superintend the affair. In such a case we should hardly offer so many warnings as the Chinese government did, before putting the agent into confinement, while the tobacco plants were destroyed.

Dec. 18th, 1839.

1834.

This opium trade proceeded under the eyes of the superintendents appointed by the British government to manage our commercial affairs in China, after the throwing open of the trade in 1834. The appointment of these superintendents as political agents, was a melancholy mistake which could not have been committed by any government aware of the inability or indisposition of the Chinese to enter into any political relations whatever. Lord Napier was the first Chief Superintendent sent out; and some glimpse of the truth, as to what our intercourse with China ought to be, appears in Lord Palmerston's instructions to Lord Napier, not to pass the Boca Tigris (at the entrance of the Canton river) in a ship of war, as "the Chinese authorities have invariably made a marked distinction between ships of war and merchantmen, in regard to the privilege of intercourse." Lord Napier, however, took his own way, against this and every other warning. Up to the time of his arrival at Macao, on the 15th of July, 1834, the Chinese had heard nothing of any appointment of superintendents: and great was their perturbation at the pomp and bustle in which they found themselves implicated. Mr. (now Sir John) Davis, was the second superintendent, and Sir George Robinson, who understood the case better, and acted more sensibly, than any body else, was the third. Lord Napier was expressly directed to announce his arrival at Canton by a letter to the Viceroy. He did so; and he went up the river in an armed vessel. From this first moment, all went wrong. The letter was declined, because, by the customs of the country, the agent's arrival must be notified to the government before any intercourse could be established; and Lord Napier had already broken through all rules in coming up the river in defiance of a direction to wait at Macao for a pass. He was told that the Hong merchants were the party through whom communications like his were to be forwarded; as only memorials and petitions were received through the channel that he had attempted: and two Hong merchants, bearing credentials, waited upon him, to hear what he had to say. Lord Napier, however, dismissed them courteously, insisted on seeing the Viceroy, or writing to him; and at last, in order to get a letter into his hands, wrote upon it the word "pin," or "petition." It does not seem to have occurred to him that provincial authorities had no power to alter in his favour the established forms of the government: and he regarded as a personal insult every impediment to the transaction of his business.

BRITISH SUPERINTENDENTS.

LORD NAPIER.

Spectator, 1840, p. 273.

Westminster Review, 1840, p. 282

It was at this stage that he took offence at the writing of his name—"laboriously vile," as he was assured it meant. His letter did not succeed. Next, he had an interview with three eminent mandarins of the province; but he hurt their feelings by insisting on their chairs of ceremony being placed according to his ideas, and not according to custom: so they referred him back to the Hong merchants. He refused to see them. He was ordered

Annual Register, 1840, p. 243.

Death of Lord Napier.

Westminster Review, 1840, p. 283.

Westminster Review, 1840, p. 284, 285.

down the river. Instead of going, he summoned two men-of-war into the river. The alarmed and perplexed authorities declared trade suspended; and Lord Napier replied by a proclamation to the Chinese merchants, in which he complained of the ignorance and obstinacy of the Viceroy. It was not possible for the Chinese to bear this: and, as Lord Napier would not depart as desired, he was dislodged by such methods as the inhabitants could command: they placed a guard round his residence, who kept away his native servants, and prevented the carrying in of provisions.—Meantime, the two frigates were working their way up the river, fired upon from the batteries on shore, losing two or three men, but doing more damage than they received, till the anxious authorities, still awaiting instructions from government, offered to let trade proceed if Lord Napier would withdraw to Macao. He had also written to his own government for instructions: but it would be so long before he could receive an answer, his situation was so embarrassing, his nerves were so fretted with anxiety, and his frame so fevered with heat and incessant worry, that he sank under his sufferings. Though surrounded by his family, and supplied with excellent medical assistance, he died shortly after his return to Macao.—The more mournful this death, the more evident is the justice of the Chinese Viceroy's argument in his proclamation: "The Chinese nation has its laws. It is so everywhere. England has its laws; and how much more so the Celestial Empire! The said foreign minister having crossed a sea of many thousand miles to inquire into, and take the superintendence of, commercial affairs, ought to be a person acquainted with the principles of government, and with the forms essential to its dignity." Acquaintance with the language ought to be added. Not only did Lord Napier bitterly complain of the terms "barbarian" and "barbarian eye" being applied to him, but it was urged upon Lord Palmerston from other quarters to insist on the omission of such terms from all future instruments of negotiation: whereas, it turns out that no offence whatever lies in the terms—the true translation of "barbarian eye" being "Head of the southern people"—or "Foreigners from the south." The Chinese may need improvement in their geography; but they so far understand courtesy as to use the proverb—"He that spits dirt first defiles his own mouth."

The Viceroy, meantime, requested the British to appoint a commercial superintendent, who should control the smuggling of opium. The practice had now become too open and extended to escape the attention of the government at Pekin—nearly forty opium vessels being then anchored at Lintin. The Chinese official at the same time expressed a desire that a commercial chief should be sent out from England, who should not be a King's officer. No notice was taken of these demands—the hope being that the Chinese would in time be driven by embarrassment to admit the agency of political officials.

1835.

Political Relations in Abeyance.

After January, 1835, matters went on smoothly for two years, owing to the good sense of Sir George B. Robinson, then Chief Superintendent, in consequence of the death of Lord Napier, and Mr. Davis's return to England. Captain Elliot, R. N., who had been secretary to the commission, was now a superintendent. Sir G. B. Robinson sent home agreeable accounts of "a quiet and prosperous routine of trade," owing to his pursuing "a perfectly quiescent line of policy." He wrote these words on the 16th of October, 1835; and we find him declaring, more than thirteen months afterwards, on the 28th of November, 1836, that he has received no despatches "conveying his Lordship's sentiments or instructions relative to the quiescent course of policy he had deemed it his duty to persevere in;"—this quiescent policy not meaning idleness on his own part, as he was all the while performing duties "of a consular nature." He had not now to wait long for an answer. His salary of £6000 a year was not to be paid for quiescence; and we find him, on the 14th of December, acknowledging the arrival of an intimation that his office was abolished. Yet, Lord Palmerston wrote, within five weeks before, to Captain Elliot, that a deputy superintendent had been appointed "to act as assistant to the Chief Superintendent;" and Captain Elliot immediately assumed the title laid down by Sir G. B. Robinson. The inevitable impression on the minds of observers was, that the "quiescent" agent was dismissed to make room for one who would make more noise in the Chinese seas.

Spectator, 1840, p. 274.

Opium prohibited.

In 1838, the opium smuggling had reached such a pass, that the government at Pekin evinced an intention of abolishing the traffic at last. Our own government had been repeatedly advised of the growing danger by Captain Elliot, who, in November, 1837, foretold that the authorities would be driven to some violent measures, from the injurious audacity of Europeans, who actually carried opium up the Canton river in their own boats. He advised that a special commissioner should be sent out to Chusan, or some other eastern port of China, to settle this bad business in a fresh scene, at a distance from the embarrassments which now attended all negotiations at Canton. The government declined taking any steps of the kind.

Annual Register, 1840, p. 245.

1837.

Spectator, 1840, p. 274.

Negligence at home.

Captain Elliot's position was now as difficult as could well be conceived; and in judging of his conduct of affairs, it should ever be borne in mind that he was left cruelly destitute of guidance from home. Some of the gravest letters he wrote, the most pressing and anxious, were received in Downing-street on the 17th of July; yet Lord Palmerston sent no reply whatever till the 2nd of November. Among the items of information thus treated was one of the last importance; that a high official had sent a memorial to the Emperor at Pekin, advising that the sale of opium should be legalized, under a duty of seven dollars per chest. The banishment of this adviser to Tartary was an indication of vigorous resolution to put down the sale of opium, which should have roused our government to immediate activity in stopping the illicit trade, instead of waiting nearly four months without even answering Captain Elliot's letters. The answers at last conveyed no instructions or guidance to the anxious superintendent; and seven months more passed before Lord Palmerston wrote again;—the date of the next despatch from Downing-street being the 15th of June, 1838. At last, some decision had been come to by the government: and it was one very embarrassing to Captain Elliot, from being so long delayed. The government resolved, very properly, to leave the opium-smugglers to meet the consequences of their ventures, in the loss of their property, if the Chinese government chose to decree its forfeiture. If this had been made known at the proper time, neither the merchants nor the superintendent would have had any cause of complaint.

1838.

Warnings to smugglers.

Before the end of the year, a seizure of opium, the property of a British trader, was made at Canton; and the man, and the ship that brought his

1834—44.

merchandise, were ordered out of the river. Yet more, the Hong merchant who secured the ship and cargo was punished with the severe punishment of the Wooden Collar, though he had nothing whatever to do with the offence. The decision of the question was evidently coming on.

Annual Register, 1840, p. 245.

1839.

Commissioner Lin.

In January, 1839, proclamation was made in Canton of the approach of the Imperial Commissioner Lin, whose business was to abolish the opium traffic, and who came furnished with summary powers for the purpose. Just before the great man appeared, a native opium-smuggler was brought into the square before the foreign factories, and publicly strangled, amidst much pomp of military array.—As soon as he arrived, Commissioner Lin issued his edict, requiring the foreigners to deliver up to him all the opium on the coast, in order to its being destroyed by burning: that a bond should be entered into that ships should bring no more opium: and that if any were brought after this, it should be forfeited, and the bringers put to death without controversy. The edict intimated that the foreigners had every thing to hope if they obeyed, and every thing to fear if they were negligent or hostile. At the same time, Lin required the presence before his tribunal of Mr. Dent, one of the most respectable of the English merchants; and to this Captain Elliot consented, on condition that Mr. Dent should be permitted to remain by his side, and not taken out of his sight for a moment. On the same night the factories were blockaded by boats on the river, and soldiery in front and rear: the servants were called out, and provisions prevented from going in. Captain Elliot saw no alternative but delivering up all the opium on the coast of China: he issued an order which summoned all the ships below the Boca Tigris, where 20,283 chests of opium were landed, and delivered over to the Chinese authorities. When the transfer was completed, and not before, the blockade was broken up, and the foreigners set free. Sixteen only were detained at the factories; and after a time they were permitted to depart, under an injunction never to return. Captain Elliot wrote urgently to the Governor-General of India, Lord Auckland, in complaint — a complaint which sounds rather strangely to those who understand the nature of the traffic, and the warnings so amply furnished to the traffickers—of that "course of violence and spoliation which had broken up the foundations of this great trade, as far as Canton is concerned, perhaps for ever:" and he requested as many ships of war and armed vessels for the defence of life and property, as could be spared from India.

Crisis.

Annual Register, 1840, 247.

This seems to have been the last point at which a turn might have been made towards the right, and peace have been preserved by an act of simple integrity. The home government had declared "her Majesty's government cannot interfere for the purpose of enabling British subjects to violate the laws of the country to which they trade. Any loss, therefore, which such persons may suffer in consequence of the more effectual execution of the Chinese laws on this subject, must be borne by the parties who have brought that loss on themselves by their own acts." This is clear enough; and it can never be too deeply lamented that Captain Elliot departed from the whole spirit and purpose of these, his latest instructions, by identifying himself and the imperial authority which he held with the opium smuggling, on suppressing which the Chinese government had now staked its power and its character.

Hansard, lxxi. 273.

If he could not help doing this—if he was pledged by any former acts to stand by the smugglers—the error is only set back to an earlier date. The thing was now done: Captain Elliot was pledged on behalf of the vicious trade, and had sent to India for as many vessels of war as could be spared.

From this time, there was no more peace. From August 1839, there were affrays between our sailors and the villagers on the coasts; thwarting and misunderstandings between the Chinese authorities and British officers; a cutting-off of provisions, and prohibition to trade. Captain Elliot petitioned Commissioner Lin for the restoration of trade, in accordance with the laws of both countries, till he could receive tidings from home: but his petition was contemptuously rejected. Commissioner Lin declared that no intercourse should take place between the two nations till the British sailor who had killed a Chinaman in a fray should be given up. However, the authorities relented so far as to permit trading to go on below the Boca Tigris; and vessels might even have gone up to Canton if the captains would have signed a bond agreeing that any introducer of Opium should be punished according to the laws of China. In Captain Elliot's eyes, such a concession was wholly out of the question, as signing the bond was, in fact, giving over English opium smugglers to capital punishment at the discretion of the mandarins, whose strictness about evidence might not equal our own. A Mr. Warner, master of the ship "Thomas Coutts," did, however, sign this bond, without consulting any body, greatly to the annoyance of the superintendent and the British merchants. Commissioner Lin was delighted with him, and forthwith insisted that all British vessels should enter as the "Thomas Coutts" had done, or depart within three days. The British believed they saw signs of the Chinese intending to attack their ships; and of course they prepared for battle. The Chinese war-junks anchored near the British ships on the 3rd of November, and the English were required to deliver up the offender who had been so often demanded. In reply, the British vessels poured a destructive fire into those of the enemy; and the war was begun. The poor unaccustomed Chinese suffered terribly, and were presently disabled; but they rallied their spirits when they saw the foreign ships retreating to Macao, and supposed that the enemy was as wretched as themselves; whereas the retreat to Macao was merely for the protection of the merchants, and to aid the embarkation of the British residents.

Annual Register, 1840, p. 248.

By the next June, an imposing array of British men of war, with attendant steamers and transports, was seen off the coasts of China; and the injured Chinese were doomed. They made what efforts they could to get rid of the encroaching and insolent strangers, who had violated their laws, to make profit of the intemperance of their people. It is said that they poisoned a boat-load of tea, for the use of the British sailors, but that it missed its way, being taken by pirates, so that the wrong party suffered by the device. It is certain that they made many attempts to burn our ships by fire-rafts; and that, in their simplicity, they advertised rewards to persons who should capture Englishmen (warning them to be particularly careful not to take Portuguese or others), and no less a sum than 20,000 dollars to any one who should secure one of our men of war, carrying not less than 80 great guns, and deliver it to the mandarins. With all this simplicity about war, its horrors were never

1834—44. met or endured by braver men. About this, the testimony is absolutely universal. The most perverse of our countrymen who defend this war at home or on the spot—who call it "a just, necessary, and honourable war," who are not afraid to pray for the aid of Heaven against those whom we have oppressed, or to return thanks for victory, or who profess to regard the affair in a missionary light, and talk of bringing the Chinese to the knowledge and love of that Christianity which we have so disgraced in their eyes—all agree that a nobler courage and constancy were never manifested than by the Chinese who fell in the field, or before their little forts, or on the threshold of their homes, which they had thought safe from invasion for ever, because their own policy was one of peace. British officers might laugh when they saw pasteboard defences, pasteboard men and wooden cannon mixed in among the troops, to make a show and terrify the foreigners; and British sailors, little knowing the mental torture they were inflicting, might jokingly secure their prisoners by tying them together in sixes by their tails: but there was no man, we are told, from the highest officer to the lowest subordinate, who was not touched by the spectacles of devotedness that he saw when citizens cut the throats of wife and children, and then their own, rather than yield to the terrible foreigners: and when officers in the field sought death with desperation when all chance of victory was over. They no doubt agreed with the saying of their Emperor, "It is no longer possible to bear with the English. Gods and men are indignant at their conduct:" and when they found these hated strangers victorious, they could no longer endure life. As they heard, after the first British conquest, that the enemy had pushed their opium trade vigorously, selling 400 chests at very high prices, they might agree with their Emperor's public declaration that it was worth every effort in war and watchfulness, to prevent the ingress of that depraving religion called Christianity. They could hardly hold any other view when the only Christians they knew were the opium smugglers, and the officials who conducted war in their defence. They fought, indeed, with as hearty a hatred of the invaders as ever the Saxons felt towards the Normans of old, or the Mexicans against the army of the United States in our day; and no one can deny that they had cause.

Annual Register, 1841, p. 280.

1840. CHUSAN TAKEN.

The narrative of the war may be briefly given. The first conquest was of the island of Chusan, which lies about midway on the east coast of China Proper. The Chinese admiral, who was also governor of the group of Chusan islands, was startled by the appearance of a British fleet on the 4th of July, 1840, when he was wholly unprepared for resistance. He went on board the Wellesley, with two mandarins, when he admitted his weakness, and endeavoured, by various devices, to gain time: but he well understood, when he left the ship, that if he was not prepared to yield up the island by day-break, it would be taken from him. In the morning, however, a great array of troops was seen, on the shore, in and about the chief city of the island, and in the war-junks which had been brought up. Fighting went on all day, and up to midnight, with little or no damage to the invaders. During the night, the British placed ten guns within 400 yards of the city. At day-break, the flags were flying from the walls as before; but all was quiet within. Only a few unarmed Chinamen were left, who held up a placard on the walls—"Save us for the sake of our wives and children." The British flag was hoisted; and news of this, our first conquest, was despatched to India and home. It was a disastrous conquest for us. The troops drank largely of spirit made from rice; the salt provisions from India were bad, and scarcely any fresh could be obtained. The men were mutinous and sick; and fever so prevailed as to obtain for Chusan the name of our Eastern Walcheren. In a very short time, of above 3,600 soldiers left in Chusan, more than a third were unfit for duty.

ADMIRAL ELLIOT'S MISTAKE.

On the 9th of August, Admiral Elliot, who had sailed northwards with a part of the squadron, arrived in the bay into which the Peho (or river of Pekin) flows. Captain Elliot, who accompanied the Admiral, went up the river with armed boats, and obtained an interview with the third man in the empire, Keshen, who was appointed by the Emperor to negotiate. The Emperor first obtained delay—during which the ships laid in supplies of provisions and water—and then, by some unaccountable means, induced the Admiral to transfer the negotiations once more to Canton. The error of leaving the vicinity of the capital, to go and treat in that distant spot where negotiation had always hitherto been in vain, was severely blamed at home. The matter was not, however, to be again discussed with Commissioner Lin. He was disgraced, and Keshen sent to occupy his post. Admiral Elliot threw up his appointment on the ground of illness.

COMMISSIONER KESHEN.

Keshen's policy was delay. He protracted the negotiations in order to provide defences for the Canton river so far superior to any yet encountered by our troops as to prove that even the Chinese could become warlike by practice and experience. When Captain Elliot was worn out by delay, he turned the affair over to Commodore Sir Gordon Bremer, who had no notion of waiting any longer. He opened his fire upon the forts from the river, on the 7th of January, 1841, and took two of them. A flag of truce, and promises of greater speed arrived the next morning; and on the 20th, the superintendent issued a Circular announcing the settlement of the preliminaries of a treaty. The treaty contained no mention whatever of the Opium traffic, the sole occasion of the war; and it was otherwise so unsatisfactory that the Ministers announced in Parliament, on its arrival, that it was to be disallowed; that Captain Elliot was recalled: and that Sir Henry Pottinger was going out to assume his office. Meantime, Sir Gordon Bremer, never doubting the fulfilment of the treaty, sent orders to the British in Chusan to evacuate the island; and he took possession, in the name of the Queen, of the island of Hong-Kong, off the mouth of the Canton river—this island being given to us by the treaty. On the 19th of February, the war was renewed by a shot being fired from one of the islands at a British boat. Our vessels and troops went up the river again on the 26th, and carried all before them—knocking over the forts, killing several eminent men among the foe, and taking many hundreds of prisoners. By the beginning of March, Keshen had been degraded, and when, on the 5th, the British ships were visible from the walls of Canton, there was no dignitary in the city who was empowered to treat with us. The naval and military commanders would have proceeded to take every thing into their own hands; but Captain Elliot requested them to wait till it should appear how the provincial authorities were disposed. Sir Le Fleming Senhouse, who had

1841.

Annual Register, 1841, p. 278.

NEGOTIATION.

Hansard, lvii 1491.

WARFARE.

1834—44. led the way in the late attacks, chafed under this delay; and Sir Gordon Bremer wrote home his fears that the lenity would be misunderstood. Attacks and retaliation were renewed; and before the end of the month, the Chinese flotilla was destroyed, and the Union Jack was flying from the walls of the British Factory at Canton. It then appeared that Keshen had been waiting for the sanction of the treaty by the Imperial government, and that his government liked the terms no better than ours did. The Emperor rejected the treaty, and resolved on war. Sir Gordon Bremer immediately started for Calcutta, to obtain reinforcements; and Admiral Senhouse assumed the command in China.

The next movement was an attack by the British, no otherwise provoked than by the spectacle of increasing arrivals of Tartar troops at Canton during six weeks of truce and partial trading. This attack took place on the 24th of May. In two days, Canton was all but taken. It lay completely in the power of the British, and Sir Hugh Gough, and Admiral Senhouse, who accompanied him into the field, were in high hope of presently announcing the capture of the city, when the superintendent again interfered, and desired them to wait while another treaty was negotiated. Sir H. Gough never concealed his mortification; and Sir Le Fleming Senhouse retired to his ship fevered with disappointment, and died heart-broken on the 14th of June.—Four days after this mournful death, Sir Gordon Bremer returned; and he was announced to the Chinese as joint-commissioner with Captain Elliot. But their task was taken out of their hands by the arrival of Sir Henry Pottinger, on the 9th of August—presently after which the displaced superintendent sailed for Bombay.

Death of Admiral Senhouse.

Annual Register, 1841, Chron. 209.

Capt. Elliot superseded.

Sir H. Pottinger.

Sir Henry Pottinger made a spirited announcement of his intention of closing the war at once, regardless of all mercantile and other retarding considerations, and devoting himself to compel the Chinese to conclude a peace honourable to England. No time, indeed, was lost. Before the end of the month, the city of Amoy was taken, and a garrison was left in an island in the harbour. When the mandarin who was second in command saw that all was over, he rushed into the sea, and drowned himself; and another cut his throat upon the field.—Early in September, Chusan and its city were again taken, though they were now much better defended than formerly. The large city of Ningpo, fifteen miles inland, fell undefended into the hands of the invaders; and wherever the British now appeared, little or no resistance was made.—An interval of some months, however, revived the courage of the inhabitants; and in March, a great body of Chinese came over the walls of Ningpo early in the morning, to recover the place. The British saw them, and took no notice till the market-place was full of them, when our troops brought up some guns, and made such slaughter, that 250 bodies were left upon the place. There is little record of any loss on our part, though the despatches tell here and there of "severe loss," "a heavy fire," and so on. We read of battles and sieges with a loss, in one place of fifteen lives, in another of two, in another of none; only "a few casualties from the arrows of the Chinese."

Annual Register, 1842, p. 266.

Capture of Ningpo.

1842. Month after month passed away, and Sir H. Pottinger had not compelled a peace, though the forces took cities, and destroyed barracks, magazines, and fortifications, wherever they chose to turn. The appearance of the troops before Nankin settled matters at last, in the summer of 1842. It was the 26th of August, more than a year after Sir H. Pottinger's arrival, when the treaty of peace was finally concluded on between three Chinese and the British Commissioner.

Treaty of Peace. Annual Register, 1842, p. 275.

By this treaty, the British were authorized to trade freely at four ports besides Canton, and to establish consuls there. The island of Hong-Kong was ceded to them; and they were to hold Chusan and another island till all the conditions of the treaty were fulfilled. Correspondence between officials of the two governments was henceforth to be conducted on equal terms. The Chinese were to pay to the British the sum of 21,000,000 of dollars (£4,375,000) by instalments, in addition to 6,000,000 (£1,250,000) already paid by the authorities at Canton as compensation for the opium destroyed. The instalments of Chinese silver continued to arrive in England, at intervals, till all was paid; and thoughtless people in the roads and streets walked beside the heavy waggons with complacency; and others, present at the opening of the chests, looked at the curious coin with amusement and pride. They were led into this by members of the government and of parliament, who called this "a just, and necessary, and honourable war," and by the common run of newspapers, which detailed every fault in the circumstances and civilization of the Chinese, as if we were called as missionaries or liberators to set things right; or imputed bad motives to the Emperor in interdicting opium; or applied droll epithets to the Chinese in contempt, and offered literal translations of documents which would not bear a literal translation from even any European language; or related how it took several hours to convey to an educated Chinese the meaning of three lines and a half of an English newspaper—not perceiving the inference that we had probably been misunderstanding the Chinese as thoroughly as they were incapable of understanding us. Insolence and folly like this are very excusable in the ordinary run of untravelled English who met the waggons of treasure from China—who conceive of nothing beyond England, and have not any living idea of difference of race, and of mental and political constitution. The disgrace of the levity and insolence rests with the members of parliament, the popular orators, and the editors of newspapers, who, if they spoke at all, should have spoken with a better knowledge, and more sense of justice and generosity. They should have asked themselves first, under a knowledge of the facts, whether, if they could suppose the English to be right in this quarrel, they could venture to pronounce the Chinese wrong.

It cannot be without much pain and sorrow that, in a History of the Thirty Years' Peace, the narrative can be offered of this Chinese war. It is impossible not to see the insolence of the very term; for, if the Chinese had not been too pacific and helpless to withstand our injuries, we should not have had thirty years of peace even to talk about. It is a yet more serious consideration, that if we had not involved ourselves in wrong, we should not have been under the temptation of shirking the name of war, calling it "operations in China," when we went into the reality. Whichever way we look at this affair, there is no comfort—at least for those who cannot be comforted with dollars, or pride in our warlike resources and experience. We are hated in China, not only as their conquerors, but for our forcing upon their society the contraband drug which they would have kept out of the reach of the intemperate of their people

—by means which we may laugh at, but which they had a right to adopt. It is an humbling story; and the wonder to a future generation will be, how we bear the shame of it so easily as we do.

1843.
Arrival of Treasure.
Annual Register, 1843. Chron. 23.
Chinese Presents.
Annual Register, 1843. Chron. 63.
Parliamentary Vote of thanks.
Hansard, lxxxvi. 536, 570.
1844.
Governor-General sent.

It was on the 3rd of March, 1843, that the first instalment of the Chinese treasure arrived at the Mint;—an amount of £1,000,000 sterling, conveyed in five waggons, and escorted by soldiers. By the bursting of one of the boxes, it was seen that the silver pieces were like the half of an egg; and the spectacle so exhilarated the spirits of the "immense crowd" that followed the waggons, that they gave three cheers, after the gates of the Mint were closed.—In May arrived the presents which the grieving Emperor of China sent to the victorious Queen of England; a golden bedstead, ear-drops worth £1000 each; a shawl, on which was wrought in needlework (as if it were a sail for Noah's Ark) every kind of beast known to the Chinese; some rare silks, jewellery, and much besides.—It was in the session of this year that parliament voted thanks, and government appropriated honours, to the officers and men employed in "the late operations" in China, by whose valour and skill "a series of brilliant and unvaried successes" was given to England to boast of. It was too like praising the skill and valour of a soldier in assaulting a quaker, even though the resolutions were moved by the Duke of Wellington in the one House, and the high-spirited Lord Stanley in the other.—The next year, 1844, a Governor-General over our acquisitions in China was appointed; and the choice of the Ministers settled on Mr., now Sir John Davis, who arrived at Hong-Kong, the seat of his government, on the 7th of May. In the course of the summer, Sir Henry Pottinger, who made the treaty, sailed for England.

Opium Compensation.
Spectator, 1843, p. 539.

The question of compensation to the Opium traders long remained a difficulty. The growers of the opium were chiefly the East India Company, who hold the monopoly in India, among their territorial privileges. They had sold it to the Canton merchants; and their being paid depended on these merchants being compensated by government for the loss of their 20,000 chests of opium. The Governor-General of India was earnest with government to pay the merchants; and Sir Henry Pottinger officially published his intention of urging their "claims" upon government. "Claims" was certainly the right word, after government had identified itself with the contraband interest in the Chinese war; but the disgrace of countenancing the smugglers, after Lord Palmerston's declaration that they must take the consequences of having violated the laws of China, is one which any Ministry might shrink from encountering. The government, by the mouth of Sir R. Peel, pronounced in favour of adhering to Lord Palmerston's declaration of 1838, so far as to take its own method of deciding how much it would pay, while the owners pleaded that their representatives at Canton gave up the opium to Captain Elliot, on his requisition "for her Majesty's service," and on his express pledge that they should be repaid the "value" of it; an expression which he at the time explained to mean the "invoice price." The claim of the merchants was eventually for the invoice price, with charges for interest and other specified matters of 17½ per cent. The government would not hear of this, but had difficulty in naming the amount for itself. Once it offered to divide among the merchants the 6,000,000 of dollars paid under the treaty as Opium compensation; but the claimants spurned it. The issue was, that whereas, taking the price of opium at the lowest during the season of the seizure, the value of the 20,000 chests was £2,042,000, the government offered and paid out of the Consolidated Fund less than £1,250,000. The House of Commons assented, and took its share of the discreditable course of action of the government in first admitting the liability of government after Captain Elliot's pledge—then offering little more than half the value of the article surrendered—and demanding from the owners an immediate acquittance in full as a condition of receiving any thing at all.

Hansard, lxxi. 296.

SIR HENRY POTTINGER ON CHINA.

Some troubles had occurred in the intercourse of the Chinese and British before Sir Henry Pottinger left China: but his tone, on his return to England, was one of strong hope and confidence. In the manufacturing districts and elsewhere, public dinners in his honour gave him the opportunity of declaring his views. He bore the most emphatic testimony to the high qualities of the Chinese, some of whose statesmen could not be surpassed by any in the world. He plainly told the English that they knew nothing about the Chinese, and were never more wrong than in despising them, or in being careless about violating their customs and hurting their feelings. He trusted that perfect freedom of trade was provided for in that region, if only the British would act with propriety and intelligent consideration. Sir Henry Pottinger was just and generous; but he was over sanguine in his expectations; as was natural enough in a man of his temperament, who had just succeeded in his aims. Our troubles with China are not over. They are thickening at this day; and a future generation may learn how much of the virtue of Free trade itself may be lost when it is introduced through a process of wrong and violence, under whatever name.

CHAPTER IV.

1837—46.

India.

AMONG the difficulties to which Sir Robert Peel's government succeeded, none was more conspicuous in the eyes of the world than our affairs in India. It was not that misfortunes had happened, such as must be looked for, from time to time, in all dependencies;—a scarcity in one region—a case of disputed succession in another—a discontented border neighbour elsewhere:—there was quite enough of this kind of difficulty. But a far more important embarrassment was that, under their own Governor-General, Lord Auckland, and by his guidance, the Melbourne Administration had involved themselves in a course of policy which, at the time of Sir R. Peel's accession to the premiership, was actually swamped by disaster.

Famine.

In 1837, many troubles occupied the attention of the Governor-General of India. In the hot plains which stretch south of the Himalayas, and through which the great rivers take their course, famine prevailed to such a degree that—to use the most forcible illustration offered at the time—the British residents at Agra and Cawnpoor were compelled to forego their evening drive, from the air being poisoned with the smell of unburied corpses. The famine was occasioned by drought, and it was followed by diseases as ravaging as itself;—by cholera and small-pox, which swept away thousands whom hunger had spared.—There was insurrection and fighting in Oude, about the succession to the throne: and the British took charge of the defeated pretender—a boy—and his grandmother, as prisoners, and imposed on the new sovereign conditions of absolute obedience to the suggestions of the British government.—The mountaineer population of Nepaul are never long quiet: and at this time (1837) they showed themselves disposed to pick a quarrel with us, and rendered it necessary to guard our north-east frontier, in preparation for a rupture.—Further round to the east, a potentate whom we had supposed a friend was showing himself hostile. The Burmese emperor, Tharawaddee, who had deposed and succeeded an insane brother, had been well thought of till power came into his hands; when he began to oppress his people, and insult the British, and threaten prodigious things: moreover, he made such preparations for assembling his barbaric rabble, and marching them to the frontier, that we had to provide for the defence of that border too.—But even these interests were trifles in comparison with that which carries our view to the north-west frontiers of British India.

Oude.

Nepaul.

Ava.

North-West Frontier.

At this date our frontier was determined by the great sandy desert, extending from the jungles on the Gorra in the Hill States of Ghurwal to the sea. Beyond this desert, to the north-west, lay the Punjaub, with its five great rivers—of which Runjeet Singh was the sovereign. Beyond the Punjaub, and west of it, lay the region, perhaps the most interesting in Asia, which has, through all known time, served as the highway between eastern and western Asia. This region lies south of Independent Tartary, which is somewhat too savage and inclement a region to serve as such a highway. The region in question, now called Caubool or Affghanistan, lies directly between the Punjaub and Persia; and all the great conquerors who have penetrated to India from the Caspian, the Black Sea, or the Mediterranean, have done so by crossing the plains and practicable mountain passes of Caubool. There is an ancient proverb that no one can be King of Hindostan without being first lord of Caubool. Alexander the Great went by those plains into India, after taking Herat, at the foot of the mountains, near the borders of Persia. Tamerlane conquered the region on his way to the Ganges: and so did Baber, the founder of the Mogul dynasty, before setting up his empire at Delhi. It was from Ghuznee, in that region, that the great enterprise of carrying the Mohammedan religion into India was accomplished by Mahmoud, the founder of the Mohammedan empire in India. There can be no question of the interest and importance of this great district of Asia. The question is what we had to do with it, and why we did not confine our Indian empire, at least while the Punjaub was still quiet, within the natural frontier (as it had hitherto been considered) of the Sandy Desert south-east of the Punjaub. To future readers of history it will probably appear that in the precipitancy of fear, and the confidence of ignorance, the British government rushed into vast immediate peril and disaster, to avoid a far distant and exceedingly doubtful evil. Forecast in territorial rule is all very well: but we have arrived at an age of the world when forecast avails less than formerly, from the more general diffusion of knowledge and prevalent excitement of the human mind: and it is no longer governments that are capable of the wisest forecast. We have had many broad hints of this within our own century; and no rebuke of such presumption, and of the policy of rushing into a quarrel to preserve future peace, has been more emphatic than that conveyed in the results of Lord Auckland's Indian policy.

AFFGHANISTAN.

It has been mentioned that Russia had obtained a footing in Persia, as was shown by the emperor being appointed guardian of the succession to the throne, though the arrangement was frustrated by an unexpected death. When Mr. Ellis, our Envoy, arrived in Persia in 1835, he found the Russian alliance more prized by the young Shah than the British, and that the Emperor's influence was paramount, though it was by means of English money, and the assistance of British officers, that the Shah was seated peaceably on the Persian throne. Such intelligence, arriving in England when the fashion of the time was to fear the power and craft of Russia, revived the old apprehension that Russia might, sooner or later, begin in earnest her work of conquering Great Britain by getting possession of her Indian territories. Once in close alliance with Persia, and excluding England from friendship and influence there, the Emperor would find only Caubool and the Punjaub lying between his armies and our possessions.—The matter was made worse—the case more alarming—by the fact that the Shah was at that time, 1835, preparing to make war on the ruler of Herat, and thus to get a footing in the territory of Caubool. In the opinion of the British envoy, there really was good cause for the expedition against Herat; but the Ministers of the Shah did not conceal from Mr. Ellis that they had no idea of stopping short at that

FEAR OF RUSSIA.

1835.

DESIGNS OF PERSIA.

1837—46. point, but intended to claim sovereignty for Persia over Ghuznee and Candahar;—that is, almost as far as the frontier of the Punjaub.—In our existing treaty with Persia, bearing date from 1814, it was provided that Great Britain should take no part whatever, unless as a mediator for peace-making purposes, by request of both parties, in any war between Persia and Affghanistan. This clause rendered it impossible for us to interfere on the present occasion; though the Russian ambassador to Persia evidently supposed that we should—the desire of England being well known to be that the quarrels among the rulers of Affghanistan should be healed, and the country made strong by the concentration of its districts under one ruler. It seemed to be fear of British interference with the claims of Persia over the great cities of Affghanistan that made the Russian ambassador so eager for the reduction of Herat as to offer his own military services in the expedition.

Mr. Ellis warned the Persian government of the extreme displeasure with which Great Britain would regard any attempt of Persia over Affghanistan, beyond that of settling its quarrel at Herat; and he proposed that that dispute should be disposed of by negotiation, rather than by war. The Persian Ministers appeared to agree to this at first, but soon evaded his offer to send a British officer to Herat for the purpose of settling the affair; Mr. Ellis daily seeing the probability draw nearer of Russian Consular agents being established in the great towns up to the very borders of the Punjaub. Under such circumstances, Persia would no longer be an outwork for the defence of India, as she had hitherto been considered, but rather must be watched as an advanced post of the enemy.

Rulers of Affghanistan.

There were endless quarrels among the rulers of different cities and districts of the Caubool territory, whether of the same or different families. It would merely confuse our narrative to go at length into these. It is sufficient to say here that the ruler of Herat was the only prince in the country of the race of the founder of the Affghan empire. The rulers of Caubool and Candahar were usurpers; and they were derived on one side of their house from the Persians through the Kuzzilbashes—the tribe of descendants of the Persian soldiers who were stationed in the mountains north of the city of Caubool. There being thus some ground of alliance between these princes and the Shah, Mr. Ellis was further alarmed by their offering to support the Shah against the ruler of Herat, if he would aid them on the side of the Punjaub, where they were in fear of the power of Runjeet Singh. A similar application was made, at the same time, to the Court of Russia. It appeared as if every thing was conspiring to bring Russia, Persia, and the rulers of Affghanistan at once, in armed alliance, within a stone's cast of our Indian frontier. It thus became all-important, in the view of the British officials at the Persian Court, to secure the independence of Herat: and when terms of reconciliation were offered by the ruler of Herat, the Shah was advised by the British envoy to accept them, and warned that, if he did not, he would lie under the suspicion, with the British government, of having ulterior objects in his warlike preparations. He chose to proceed, however, and set out for Herat at the end of July—the Russian government at St. Petersburg declaring that this was against advice from Russia, which had counselled delay and negotiation, in order to avoid war. Much of the mischief now brewing arose from the impossibility of knowing what was true about the conduct of Russia. While professions of peaceable counsel were made at St. Petersburg, British officers in the interior of Asia were reporting of the appearance of Russian agents, who made large promises of support against Herat, and offered news of a great Russian army on its march. There is no saying what was true, and what was not: but it is too plain that British officers forgot how strong our forces would prove themselves on our own territory, and how much Russia must go through before she could show herself there. A mere glance at the map might have made them ashamed of their panic; and they must have known much more than the map can tell of the difficulties of the march of an army from Russia to the Desert below the Gorra;—of the snows and the sands, the heats and the frosts, the rocky defiles and the barren plains, which a wearied army must pass, and know to be in their rear, before they could get a sight of our territory and opposing forces. By such panic on the part of British officers, it was decided to save Russia a large part of these dangers, by plunging into them ourselves, in order to meet her half way.

British Agency at Caubool.

Annual Register, 1839, p. 325.

Capn. Burnes.

The ruler of Caubool, Dost Mohammed, in his fear of attack from the Punjaub, applied not only to Russia and Persia for help, but to the Governor-General of India. Lord Auckland, in reply, sent Captain Burnes on a commercial mission to Caubool, where he arrived in September, 1837, while the Shah of Persia was slowly making his way from his own capital in the direction of Herat. Before his arrival, a Persian agent had settled at Candahar; and the Persian was for ever busy showing the Affghan rulers how much more advantageous the Russian and Persian alliance would be to them than the British. Captain Burnes represented to his government that he was somewhat coolly treated; and in consequence, he was invested with political attributes not at all contemplated in the first instance. From this moment, Lord Auckland entered upon that course of supposed competition with Russia in the East which led to disasters greater than Russia could ever have inflicted upon us, if we had remained quiet within our own frontier. The ensuing months were spent in efforts of the Russian and British agents to outwit and countermine each other at Caubool. It will be evident that here every thing depended on the sincerity of Dost Mohammed and the judgment of Captain Burnes—about both of which different opinions existed at the time. Subsequent events have thrown light on the character of Captain Burnes's mind. The goodness of his heart and of his purposes is not doubted; but it appears that he was confident in pursuing a policy of over-caution, and credulous while following up a track of suspicion. We do not know, and can never know, how far his being possessed with a set of ideas coloured to him the facts before his eyes; nor do we know any thing of the worth of his authorities. Our confidence, however, is not increased by the fact that he was vehemently hated by the chiefs. He acted much on reports of private interviews and conversations, as well as written correspondence. Of course he vouched for the goodness of his information: but he was equally confident on that last fatal morning when he sat down to breakfast in his house at Caubool while his murderers were gathering in the street. He continued to send communications of a "startling nature," and Lord Auckland continued to be startled, in apparent blindness to the impracticability, or, to say the least, the extreme wildness of the enterprises imputed to Russia.

Herat.

Edinburgh Review, July, 1840, p. 341.

Annual Register, 1839, p. 333.

Explanations of Russia.

Note, Decr. 20th, 1838.

Meantime, Herat held out, month after month, against 40,000 men and 80 pieces of cannon; and its protracted defence was mainly owing to the skill of an English officer, Lieut. Pottinger, within the walls, in contravention of the skill of Russian officers who directed the siege without. The lapse of time made the defence of Herat of more importance continually, as insults were heaped upon the British more abundantly, and as it became more evident that the independence of Affghanistan depended on that of Herat, whose former offence against the Shah was considered by our Envoys to be fully expiated by repeated reasonable offers to treat. In the course of 1838, our envoy in Persia had set out for the Turkish frontier on his way home, and five British ships of war were in the Persian gulf, having landed troops in the island of Karrak:—the treaty between Candahar and Persia was made and signed, under the superintendence of a Russian agent, and Captain Burnes had been advised to leave Caubool. It was believed that Dost Mohammed and the Russian agents were tampering with the rulers of Scinde, to induce them to trouble British India through all its western provinces; and it was feared that news had spread up to the mountain tops of Nepaul and down the remotest branches of the Ganges, that a great trial of power was taking place between Russia and England at Herat, and would soon be witnessed in the British Indian territories. It is a curious incident in the midst of these alarms, and one which, as it appears, should have brought the alarmists to some reflection, that Herat did not fall. The Persian army, backed by all the power of Russia, as was said, could not take this one city, defended for ten months under the direction of Lieutenant Pottinger. On the 9th of September, 1838, the Shah broke up his camp, and set forth homewards, having gained no successes, but lost many men, and wasted much treasure. At the same time, the Russian government plainly denied, when called to account, having ever dreamed of disturbing our eastern possessions; declared that it had never ceased to protest against the siege of Herat; and that, when the Shah persisted in that war, it had stipulated that Herat, if captured, should be annexed to Candahar, that the integrity of Affghanistan might be preserved. Among these contradictory accounts, it has never been settled what was really true—whether the Russians moving about in Affghanistan were political adventurers on their own account, as well as commercial government agents: whether the British agents were justified in their suspicions, or were deceived—and whether Russia was betrayed by her own servants, or foully attempted to betray us. However this was, preparations were already making by the Indian government for the invasion of Affghanistan: and, at the very time, Russia was recalling both her agents, sending to Persia an envoy more acceptable to England, and to Candahar an agent expressly charged to enter upon none but commercial negotiations. With these arrangements, our Foreign Minister declared himself abundantly satisfied: and it shows how intense and unreasonable was the fear of Russia in some minds at that time, that for this our Foreign Minister was actually believed by certain persons to be in the interest—even in the pay—of Russia. To most, however, it was enough that Lord Durham first, and Lord Clanricarde afterwards, at St. Petersburg, were satisfied with the declarations of Russia; and Lord Palmerston at home with the explanations of the Russian ambassador; while the Russian agents in the East were changed on our complaint; and, above all, Herat was not taken. But our Political Agents in India appear still to have been possessed of the idea which led the British so far beyond their own frontier, and the ordinary range of their concerns.

Ld. Auckland's Declaration of War. Annual Register, 1839, p. 339.

The most decided act of interference in affairs beyond the province of the British was in the Governor-General's proclamation of the 11th of October, 1838, published to the Bengal division of the army at Simla, on the Jumna. This Manifesto relates the particulars of our disagreement with Persia, exhibits the unfriendly dealings of Dost Mohammed of Caubool towards our ally of the Punjaub, Runjeet Singh, and his evident disinclination to have dealings with the British; and declares that, as there could be little hope of tranquillity for our North-western provinces in such a state of things, it was determined to depose the rulers of Caubool and Candahar, who were of an usurping race, and to place Shah Soojah on the throne. It had often been said before this time—and it has been earnestly repeated since—that the way to have peace in India is to send out soldiers, rather than civilians, to be Governors-General: and certainly this declaration of war goes far to confirm the saying. It is scarcely conceivable that a great military ruler could have done an act so rash as Lord Auckland did in thus proclaiming war. He was no doubt wrought upon by military advisers in a way that a military Governor-General would not have been: he knew less than a soldier would have done what such a war imports; and no soldier could easily have proved himself less of a statesman than the whole conception of this Affghan war proved its responsible author.

Affghan Princes.

In England, and half over India, people asked who was Shah Soojah? His story was this. The descendants of Ahmed Shah, the founder of the Affghan empire, were driven out of its eastern portion by means of an able minister of one of them, who, being of another tribe, divided the governments of Caubool, Peshawur, and Candahar, among his brothers, who left only Herat (as has been said) to the old reigning family. The Prince whose Minister thus encroached upon his power was called Mahmoud: and this Mahmoud had himself deposed his half-brother, who reigned at Caubool. This half-brother was Shah Soojah. Thus, Shah Soojah belonged to the original ruling family: he was deposed by Mahmoud, his half-brother: it was Mahmoud's Minister who provided for the expulsion of the family; and it was one of this Minister's family, Dost Mohammed, who now ruled at Caubool, and whom Lord Auckland had resolved to depose. It may be mentioned that the usurping family had once set about restoring Shah Soojah to his throne, after his escape from captivity in the Punjaub: but he offended them; and they transferred their nominal favour to his brother Eyoob. But they in fact reigned without interruption—setting aside the claims of even the son of their eldest brother, who died after seeing his fine province of Cashmere annexed to the Punjaub, and Peshawur reduced to the condition of a vassal city; and Balkh incorporated with Bokhara; and the Ameers of Scinde declaring themselves independent. Thus, the Affghan empire was much weakened at the time when Lord Auckland declared war against it, for the sake of setting up in it a sovereign who would keep the peace with us.

Shah Soojah.

Dost Mohammed.

The plan was that the British, Runjeet Singh, and Shah Soojah, should co-

1837—46.

Scheme of Alliance.

operate, for the objects of all three. The new Affghan ruler was to enter upon his dominion surrounded by his own troops, and supported by the British, who should retire, and leave the country altogether when the restoration should be fully accomplished. Herat was to be left as it was; and a guaranteed independence was to be offered to the Ameers of Scinde.

Ameers of Scinde.

These Ameers of Scinde were a family of ten or twelve brothers and cousins, sons of the four Ameers, brothers, who had ruled Scinde in peace with each other. Tho fathers of the present Ameers had released themselves from their half-yearly tribute to the Affghan rulers; and now, Runjeet Singh was demanding a large tribute. It was from these tributes that Scinde was released by the present treaty. The Ameers were to permit the British to march through their country; and the force from Bombay went up through the heart of it, on the Indus, while some of the Bengal troops crossed the northern portion. The army was, however, so ill-treated in the Ameers' country, and the Princes wero themselves so evidently hostile, that it was necessary to bring a second force from Bombay, to keep Scinde quiet in our rear; and then again, to compel the Ameers to permit us to keep an army permanently in their country, on the west side of the Indus—three of the Ameers paying £30,000 a year for the maintenance of these troops. Thus were our operations and our embarrassments extending, when we had once put our hand over our own frontier; and thus did one act of interference necessitate more. It was for less than two years that Scinde remained even manageably tranquil under this last arrangement.

Treaty, Mar. 11th, 1839

At the end of November, 1838, Runjeet Singh and Lord Auckland met at Ferozepore, the last of our settlements in the North West, and, of course, the nearest to the Punjaub. The meeting and greeting of the rulers, their retinues and armies, was a very splendid sight. Sir Alexander (late Capt.) Burnes was sent on in advance of the expedition, and the army that followed was much reduced, in consequence of the news having arrived of the retreat of the Shah of Persia to his own dominions. It was believed that, in the present state of affairs, a very easy task lay before the British forces.

Invasion of Affghanistan.

The most direct road for the invaders would have been to have crossed the Punjaub from Ferozepore, in the direction of Peshawur; but, as we have said, the Bombay troops had a troublesome passage through Scinde. In fact, they had to fight their way up, taking cities along their course. The Bengal force therefore went down to the south-west to meet them; and the junction was effected at Shikarpore, within the boundaries of Scinde, near the Affghan frontier. The command of the expedition was given to Sir John Keane, the Bombay commander-in-chief. The meeting was not a very cheering one. Shah Soojah was there, with his troops, who formed the centre of the army. The British forces had suffered much from the fatigues of the way, and yet more from the attacks of the Beloochees, who by no means approved this invasion of the state which adjoined theirs on the north, by means of humbling that which lay on the east. The army was already more reduced than by a great battle. But the worst was before them. It was March; and the heat in the jungles was overpowering, while in the mountain passes snow drove in the soldiers' faces. The Beloochees were always like a whirlwind in flank and rear (never in front)—catching up every straggler, and sweeping off camels, provisions, and baggage. The enemy dammed up the rivers, so as to flood the plains; and the force had to wade, for miles together, between dyke and dyke, with only the jungle in alternation. The days of their going through the Bolan pass were great days for the banditti of the region, and for their chief, the holder of the strong fortress of Khelat, who was now negotiating with the British political agent on the one hand, while, on the other, he was sending out his robber force to strip the army in the Bolan pass. The tents that were left among the rocks and snow, the camels and their loads, were the booty of the Beloochees; and the troops emerged from the Bolan pass, hungry and destitute—the soldiers put on half-rations, and the camp-followers fighting for the remains of the horses that fell dead upon the road. Shah Soojah's force was reduced from 6000 to 1500 men; and the British officers wrote home that the march had no parallel but in the retreat of the French from Moscow.

THE BOLAN PASS.

Annual Register, 1839, p. 312.

Candahar was undefended—its prince having repaired to his brother, Dost Mohammed, at Caubool. The aged Shah Soojah entered Candahar on the 24th of April, and was there crowned in May, amidst loud expressions of joy, with which the angry people covered their discontent for the present.—After a few weeks, spent in recruiting the strength of the army, and collecting provisions, Sir J. Keane proceeded to attack Ghuznee—one of the strongest fortresses of that strongly-fortified country. The journey was difficult and tedious: but the siege and storming of Ghuznee were admirably managed. The son of Dost Mohammed was taken prisoner; and the Dost himself, on hearing the news, dispersed his force, and left Caubool to Shah Soojah, who entered it on the 7th of August.

CANDAHAR.

GHUZNEE.

The British now supposed that all was done. Dost Mohammed was known to have fled into Bokhara; new governors were appointed in the place of such chiefs as would not acknowledge the restored sovereign; and the bandit fortress of Khelat was taken by General Willshire. The invaders rejoiced as if there were nothing hollow in this sudden conquest;—as if the Dost was not to come back—nor the Ghilzee chiefs to rise—nor Khelat to be taken from us;—all of which happened very soon. Sir J. Keane left at Caubool a force much too small for a position so dubious: and while there were too few men, there were far too many women and children. The slightest knowledge of the character of the people ought to have shown the managers of the invasion that this was no place yet for the residence of English ladies and young children, or for thousands of helpless camp-followers hanging about the soldiery, whose utmost efforts might be required at any moment. In the rash confidence which marked the whole series of transactions, Sir Alexander Burnes encouraged any and every body to sit down beside him in Caubool, where he cultivated his garden, wrote gladsome letters to Scotland, and praised the people by whom he was soon to be murdered: and Mr. M'Naghten, appointed Political Resident, never doubted about settling his wife in the same place: and other officers naturally shared in the confidence of these leaders. No less naturally did the government at home share that confidence; and with a haste which now looks like a satire on the wisdom of the ministry and parliament of the time, honours were lavishly decreed. Mr. M'Naghten and Col. Pottinger were made baronets; Sir J. Keane was raised to the peerage, and Lord Auckland was made an earl. By the Governor-General's order, the troops were not only well rewarded with

KHELAT.

SETTLEMENT AT CAUBOOL.

Hansard, li. 1173. 1331.

pay, but they were to bear on their regimental colours the word "Affghanistan." Another bitter satire!

In October, the army returned to India,—one portion to Bengal, under Lord Keane; the other, through the Bolan pass, to the Indus, and thence to Bombay. The very insufficient force left behind was placed under two commands; General Nott having charge of Candahar and the southern region as far as the Bolan pass; and Col. Sale the northern, from Ghuznee to Caubool and Jellalabad. The British army had scarcely disappeared before it became plain that Shah Soojah was hated with a hatred too strong for concealment;—hated as being as much worse than the British, as a domestic traitor is worse than a foreign foe. He was looked upon as having sold his country to the infidels; Annual Register, 1840, p. 229. and before the year was out, he received intimations that some who had sworn allegiance to him under British compulsion were on the look-out for the Russians, whom they would immediately join. It really seemed as if we had been helping the Russians, instead of raising any barrier against them.

Meantime, it seemed to the alarmists, who managed political affairs in this quarter, as if Russia were really coming to India. She was, in fact, aiming Khiva. towards the north-west corner of Bokhara, where Khiva extends; a district which lies between the Caspian, Persia, and the Oxus, and whose inhabitants were declared to have incurred the wrath of the Russian government by annoying such of their neighbours as were Russian subjects, exacting tribute from Russian caravans, and interrupting the regular trade of Central Asia. Annual Register, 1840, p. 231. Such, whether true or not, were the allegations of the Russian government. A more prominent charge still, and that which occasioned a formal declaration of war in December, 1839, was, that the Khiva people made slaves of all the Russians they could lay their hands on. The fisherman on the Caspian was carried away from his nets, and the travelling merchant from his goods. Khiva merchants had been detained as prisoners in Russia, till the slaves should be set free: but only 100 had been restored, while 200 were in course of capture on the shores of the Caspian alone. So the Emperor threatened vengeance on Khiva. But the elements were too strong for even the wrath of a Czar. The soft-falling snow—silent and persevering—stopped the echoes of his royal thunder, and stifled his complaints, and barred his progress, and buried some of his men and horses, and turned back the rest. Little Khiva defied great Russia, as little Circassia had long been doing. Here was another lesson for us on our haste in making war for the sake of future peace;—on our rashness in invading neighbours as a precaution against a far-distant enemy, who might never be able to get at us, even if he wished it. He would certainly not come down upon us through Khiva. And now, our experience of army travelling in Affghanistan might well abate our apprehension that Russia could meet us in the field, after a prodigious journey, of which such a country as this was the last stage.

Khelat lost. In 1840, Khelat was taken from us again: the little garrisons and detachments scattered through the country were harassed by the incessant watchfulness rendered necessary by the hostility of the tribes in their neighbourhood: Colonel Sir Robert Sale found that treaties and agreements with the chiefs of the mountain district of Kohistan, which was under his charge, were absolutely vain—the inhabitants thinking bad faith a virtue in such a cause. They harboured the Dost, and played tricks for him, and fought with him: but the gallant Sale put them down—finally, as every body thought, on the 2nd of November—little dreaming what was to happen on that day twelvemonths. Dost Mohammed walked through the British camp, with a single follower, actually unobserved, entered Caubool, and surrendered himself. He was sent to Calcutta, and finally permitted to settle at Loodeeana, at the extremity of our territory, and on the frontier of the Punjaub. He was a captive whom it gratified the complacency of the authorities to receive and have under their eyes: for, the more doubtful a policy, the more precious are its incidental fruits. Dost Mohammed had polite and cheerful manners; and he was entertained with delighted hospitality. London people heard of him at the time as being at the Governor-General's parties, and playing chess with the Governor-General's sister. As he was fingering the pieces, no one knew better than he what a game was meditated, and actually begun in his own home beyond the Punjaub;—what checks and overthrow were prepared for those who were smiling upon him as the pledge of their being sure of their game.

TROUBLES OF THE BRITISH.

DOST MOHAMMED TAKEN.

Annual Register. 1841, p. 273.

GEN. ELPHINSTONE.

PORTENTS.

Eyre's Journal, p. 16.

Annual Register, 1841, p. 274.

In April, 1841, Major-General Elphinstone assumed the command of the troops in Affghanistan. This officer had won reputation in the Peninsular war; but he was now old, in bad health, and, as soon appeared, so weakened in mind as to be unfit for any military duty whatever. In May, Major Pottinger arrived from Calcutta, having been appointed political agent for Kohistan. The moment he arrived, he saw—and said in proper quarters—that the force left was altogether insufficient for the need; and that it was necessary to prepare for risings of the Ghilzee chiefs at any moment. Sir William M'Naghten, usually as sanguine as his comrades, admitted that there might be some truth in this—Lord Auckland having forced upon him a reduction of the allowances to the chiefs, at the very moment when their good-will was most indispensable. The enmity of the Ghilzees had been, in fact, exasperated beyond hope of accommodation, by a mistake committed a few months before, when a British officer had slaughtered a small garrison friendly to the Shah, on the supposition of their being foes. A chief was among the victims, to avenge whom 5000 Ghilzees took up arms; and during the first months of 1841, they were watching only for an opportunity.

THE PUNJAUB.

During this season of suspense, there were changes going on behind them which would have materially altered the position and prospects of the British at Caubool, if a speedy fate had not been preparing for them on the spot. The Punjaub was in a hopeless state of disturbance. Runjeet Singh, "our faithful and highly-valued ally," as the government proclamation styled him, had died; and the two next heirs were already snatched away—in the course of a few months. The new rajah was believed to have been poisoned. His son and successor, returning from the funeral, was struck by a beam which fell from a gateway upon his elephant, and died in a few hours, at the age of twenty-two. The disputes about the succession which now took place between the widow of the elder deceased rajah and an illegitimate son of Runjeet Singh, let loose all the passions of the turbulent Sikhs; and the Punjaub could no longer be regarded as a friendly and safe country, immediately in the rear of the Caubool force, into which they might retreat if pressed by misfortune.—Another event

Recall of Lord Auckland.
Annual Register, 1841, Chron. 130.

of material importance was the recall of Lord Auckland by the new government at home, who sent out Lord Ellenborough in his stead. How far the invasion of Affghanistan would be sanctioned and supported by the new Governor-General, would soon appear. Meantime, those who approved the late policy were sorry that the ruler who was responsible for it was withdrawn; while those who saw in this policy the operation of irresponsible military counsels through the inexperience and ignorance of a civil ruler, were sorry that another civilian was sent out instead of one of our great soldiers, who might not only look to the proper conduct of our new war, but, from his experience of the evils of war, might save us from going further in our course of aggression in Asia.

Lord Ellenborough.

British at Caubool.
Eyre's Journal, Map.

It was an anxious summer for the British at Caubool. They were living in cantonments, near the city. Their position was so arranged as that they were a mile and a half from the citadel—the Bala Hissar—where Shah Soojah resided; and a river lay between; all the four corners of the cantonments, where there were defences, were commanded by hills or Affghan forts; and their provisions were actually stored in a fort at some distance from cantonments. General Elphinstone became more and more helpless; and he called in, as his adviser, an officer whose sole thought was to get back to India, and who therefore discouraged every effort to strengthen the position of the Caubool force. From the moment that a force knows itself to be ill commanded, its heart and soul die out; and so it was now. The officers grew moody and disheartened, as they saw their situation becoming dangerous, while it seemed too plain that they would neither be allowed to prepare for defence now, nor to fight hereafter. The men were worn and weary with incessant watching, with bearing the insults of the natives, and with receiving frequent tidings of their comrades being picked off by roving enemies, as often as opportunity offered. The ladies occupied themselves with their gardens, which, in that temperate climate, rewarded all the pains taken. Sir Alexander Burnes gloried in his, which was attached to his house in the city: and during these last months of his life, he was as confident and gay as ever. He had real friends among the Affghans; and these friends warned him again and again of danger—told him that he was deceived—that the ground was mined beneath his feet—and that he must save himself now, or not at all. He did not believe a word of it. He kept his fears for Russia, and was perfectly satisfied about Affghanistan. The envoy, Sir William M'Naghten, was less happy. One of the last things he said—in the next December—was, that a thousand deaths were better than the hell of suspense he had lived in for six weeks; and already, he was having some foretaste of that bitter suffering. The aged Shah Soojah could do nothing. He was merely a puppet prince set up by us, in the absence of any real call to the throne. He remained retired in the Bala Hissar, hated by the people, and pitied by the British for his contemptible position—some few, the while, strongly doubting his fidelity. We find throughout the narratives of this war a painful suggestion thrown in here and there, that this or that incident makes for or against the supposition of Shah Soojah's fidelity.—For some months, there was hope that General Nott was coming on from Candahar, with a clear head upon his shoulders, a cheerful spirit in his breast, and a well-disciplined force at his heels. But he did not appear; and then it became known that he could not come at all at present. He had quite enough on his hands below.

Eyre's Journal, p. 165.

Early in September, there were small treasons and skirmishes in the mountains north of Caubool, when parties were out collecting the revenue. Later in September, Major Pottinger came to Caubool with fresh information, which so far convinced Sir William M'Naghten of the probability of a rising in Kohistan, that he resolved to detain as hostages the sons of the great chiefs.—Early in October, the second son of Dost Mohammed—that Akber Khan in whose hand the fate of the British in Affghanistan was henceforth to lie—came down from the north, and posted himself in the Khoord Caubool pass—ten miles from the city;—that pass being the only way back to Hindostan. General Sale, who would have been in his winter quarters at Jellalabad before this, but for the treasons and skirmishes in the mountains, now set forth, to clear this pass. His troops might force it, but they could not clear it. The foe was perched on the rocks, where no guns could be brought to bear upon them; and the British had to run the gauntlet through the whole pass. Gen. Sale was himself wounded.

Akber Khan now had command of the British communications. It is piteous to read of the suspense at the cantonments after this. There were rumours of battles, with great slaughter of the British on the road to Jellalabad, and no letters came to clear up the matter. Sometimes, a messenger arrived; but he brought only newspapers—not a written line for even the General. Sometimes, a letter or two came with a forged seal—sometimes a letter which itself appeared to be forged. On the 31st of October, "no despatches for the General," nor private letters: but further accounts hoped for to-morrow. On that morrow, "no letters from camp, which has caused both surprise and anxiety." This was an easy foretaste of the horrors of the next day—November 2nd. On this night, once more and for the last time, Sir Alexander Burnes's Affghan friends came to him with warnings: and this once more in vain. He was as confident as ever. The next morning, while he and his brother and Captain Broadfoot were at breakfast, the street filled, and the cries of the crowd told too well what they came for. Burnes was sure it was only a riot, and sprang into the balcony to address the people. The enemy burst in. Broadfoot killed six with his own hand before he fell. All three were murdered on the spot, though Shah Soojah sent word, some hours after, to Sir W. M'Naghten that all was well with Burnes. Shah Soojah also said that if the rebellion was not over that night, he would burn the city the next day: but he neither did that nor any thing else, but order the guns of the citadel to fire—which they did all day, without any apparent effect.

Lady Sale's, Journal, p. 31.

RISING AT CAUBOOL.

For two months after this, all was unmitigated wretchedness. General Sale was hoped for—looked for—but he did not come. He could not; and his wife and comrades were told it was because his soldiers had forsaken him. General Nott never came—also because he still could not. Ammunition failed; and, what was if possible worse, food failed. The Commissariat fort, which stood detached, as has been said, was taken, through sheer inertness and mismanagement of the authorities. There had been three possible courses for the British:—to go back to India; to remain in cantonments, in a state of defence, till aid should arrive; or to go to the Bala Hissar, and crowd in there, sacrificing the horses, but securing human life at least, till reinforcements should come. All these were difficult and dangerous; and each entailed

SUSPENSE.

Murder of the Envoy.

great sacrifices; but a vigorous adoption of any one would have left some chance to somebody. But there was no vigour, no concert—the few who were fit to command, and the many who were ready to act, were paralyzed by neglect and prohibitions. The insulting enemy hovered round, and picked off every straggler, and especially, all the messengers whom they could hit. Then, there was talk of treaties; and the wretched Envoy—the most responsible man, and yet disabled by the imbecility of the General—caught at every false hope thus held out. Rather than endure the daily sight of the perishing force, he went out to treat—even falling into the snare of negotiating an underhand treaty which no man in any but a desperate condition would have believed attainable—and thus losing something of his honour in the eyes of the enemy. He went out to treat, saying to his companions what has been quoted of the horrors of the last six weeks, and was seized by Akber Khan himself, and murdered on the spot. Those who saw the two faces, tell of them as what can never be forgotten:—Akber Khan's charged with "diabolical ferocity,"—Sir W. M'Naghten's with "horror and astonishment." The Affghans made a plaything of his head, with its green spectacles, and held up one of his severed hands at the prison window of the officers who had been rescued by the intervention of Affghan chiefs. Captain Trevor, whose wife and seven children were with the force, was murdered with the Envoy. This decisive event happened on the 23rd of December.

Lady Sale's Journal, p. 195.

Retreat of the British.

The British were now "advised" by the enemy to go back to India: and they were so nearly starved that they agreed to do so: though some of the officers were still of opinion that they should fight their way for the mile and a half which lay between the cantonments and the citadel, and take refuge there—trusting to the interest of the country people to supply them with food. They set out, however, some of them knowing that the Affghan chiefs were saying that they would allow only one man to live: that they would cut off his limbs, and set him down at the entrance of the Khyber pass, with a letter between his teeth warning the British to meddle no more with Affghanistan. Many set forth, believing this boast to be not unreasonable: and it was too true that only one man reached Jellalabad. Those who gave themselves up as prisoners and hostages were saved—such of them as did not die of fever and hardship—but only one man performed the march from Caubool to Jellalabad. The doom of the force was clear at the end of five miles. Four thousand five hundred fighting men, and twelve thousand camp-followers, besides women and children, set forth from Caubool on the 6th of January. The distance traversed that day was only five miles; yet it was two o'clock in the morning before the last of the force came up. The glare from the burning cantonments was visible to the fugitives as they sat in the snow, and heard what had been the destruction already, and knew what a road lay before them. Officers and soldiers lay dead in the bloody snow, all the way back to Caubool; baggage was abandoned at the very gates of the cantonments; the ladies had only what they wore, and some of them, hurried away or sick, wore only night-clothes. Each day was worse than the last. One lady had her youngest boy snatched from her arms by an Affghan; and another saw her eldest girl put into a sack, and carried off. The camp-followers, whose frost-bitten feet would carry them no further, died by hundreds along the road-side, or crawled in among the rocks, without food or prospect of any. On the fourth day only 270 soldiers were left. On the fifth, the loss altogether was 12,000 out of 17,000 men. On the sixth day there were but 20 to make a stand against the still-tormenting foe. Twelve escaped from a barrier which detained them cruelly long under the enemy's fire: and of these twelve, six dropped before reaching the last town to be passed. Near this town, some peasants offered bread to the remaining six, who were famishing. They stayed a few moments only; but in those few moments the inhabitants were arming. Two were immediately cut down. The other four fled as men may do who have death at their heels, and safety almost within sight: but three of the four were overtaken and slaughtered within four miles of Jellalabad, and Dr. Brydon arrived alone. He was seen from the fort stooping over his jaded pony, evidently wounded—looking as forlorn in his approach as could be imagined. He was supposed to be a messenger, and the gate was opened in readiness to admit him: but his only message was such an one as perhaps no other man has ever had to deliver—that he was the sole remnant of an army. Except the burying of Cambyses' army in the African desert, such a destruction has perhaps never been heard of in the world.

Prisoners saved.

There were more saved, however, than Dr. Brydon knew of. The omnipresent Akber Khan, who had proposed to escort the force to Jellalabad, and then declared that he could not protect them, offered to save the ladies and children if the married and wounded officers were delivered, with their families, into his hands. These prisoners were carried about from fort to fort till the next summer, when they were released in consequence of the advance of fresh British troops. General Elphinstone was among the prisoners. He died—greatly to the relief of all to whom his fame, and the respect due to grey hairs, were dear—in the course of this captivity. His case was clear, and government was saved the pain of calling him to account.—Among the captives was the remarkable woman to whom we owe much of our knowledge of the incidents of this terrible history—the wife of General Sale. Her narrative shows her a true soldier, and one of the bravest. If, in reading her narrative, we almost recoil from the hardihood which could sustain itself in that inaction which is often fatal to high courage, we cannot but fervently admire it in the form of cheerful patience under protracted personal suffering, and inconceivable discomforts. Her husband met her and their widowed daughter, with her new-born infant, and the other prisoners, on the 20th of September, 1842, nearly nine months after the march from Caubool.—When General Elphinstone wrote to General Sale, at that disastrous time, to leave Jellalabad, and return to India, the General resolved to hold his post at all risks; and it is said that his captive wife urged him by letter to do so, regardless of the consequences to herself. If so, this meeting of the 20th of September might well be a happy one; for General Sale had held his post till relieved on the 16th of April.

Lady Sale.

General Sale.

Up to the moment of Lord Ellenborough's arrival, in February, 1842, Lord Auckland had done every thing in his power for the rescue of the force so rashly left in Affghanistan. Troops were sent in abundance; but the difficulty was to get them through the defiles by which the country must be entered. No man yet had ever traversed the Khyber pass in the face of an enemy—Nadir

1837—46.

Relief from India.

Shah himself having purchased a passage from the tribes which guard it: but General Pollock now achieved it, with extreme difficulty and risk, and by means of a strong excitement of the valour of the troops. On the 16th of April, the exhausted garrison of Jellalabad saw the reinforcements coming up; and vast was the cheering and firing of cannon. General Sale had done marvels during the intervening months in repairing his wretched fortifications, procuring food, and keeping off the enemy: and when an earthquake overthrew most of his defences in the middle of February, he set to work again with undiminished spirit. The earthquake brought up Akber Khan, who had finished every thing elsewhere, and now came to drive out the last of the infidels. He was fought with incessantly till the 7th of April, when the hope of the approach of General Pollock justified a decisive attack on the Affghans. The British triumphed, recovered some of the guns lost by their dead comrades in the winter, and burned Akber's camp.—It was in this month of April that General Elphinstone died; and also Shah Soojah. Whether this Prince remained faithful to us or turned treacherous, is not understood to this day. It is known only that he was murdered near Caubool in the midst of some dispute about an expedition against Jellalabad. Great confusion ensued upon his death: and the course of affairs is wholly obscure till we see Dost Mohammed once more in power.

Murder of Shah Soojah.

Sickness and other difficulties detained the British forces at Jellalabad till the end of August. A great number died, and the rest were not in the best condition for forcing the passes to Caubool. It was done, however, and admirably, and the army encamped, on the 15th of September, on the race ground of Caubool. The British standard was hoisted on the Bala Hissar. The Kuzzilbashes, before mentioned as of Persian descent, and hostile to Dost Mohammed and his tribe, were our best friends throughout; and it was by their aid that the prisoners were brought back, when actually on their way to hopeless captivity beyond the Oxus. The Kuzzilbash quarter was therefore spared, in the destruction of Caubool; and so was the Bala Hissar. The rest was laid in ruins; and the first part that was blown up was the bazaar, built in the reign of Aurungzebe. General Nott came up from Candahar, victorious—though the reinforcements sent to him from Scinde could not reach him, but were actually obliged to turn back after having traversed the Bolan Pass. Ghuznee had fallen from us too, and its name had lost the glory it had had when it gave his honours to Lord Keane. General Nott, after having evacuated Candahar, fought the Affghans near Ghuznee, and beat them, and was ready to attack the fortress, when it was found that the enemy had retired. The city and fortress were immediately and totally destroyed; and General Nott moved on, fighting one more battle by the way, to join the forces already at Caubool.

Caubool destroyed. Annual Register, 1842, p. 256.

Ghuznee destroyed.

The new Governor-General had meantime, by proclamation, ordered the British forces to evacuate Affghanistan. This proclamation declares it contrary to British policy and ideas to force a sovereign on a reluctant people (a declaration which must have astonished the Affghans); and, adverting to the death of Shah Soojah, promises to recognise any ruler whom the Affghans shall choose, with any prospect of peace for their country. In the beginning of November, the British troops left the country which they should never

Evacuation of Affghanistan. Annual Register, 1842, p. 254.

have entered, and where some of them finally disgraced our military reputation by acts of rapine and cruelty, in an expedition in Kohistan, which the Affghans themselves could never have surpassed. It was a fitting end of one of the most iniquitous wars on record.—The public despatches and private journals of the time speak, in set terms, of the honour of our arms being avenged, stains wiped out, and so forth: but this is cant. The honour of our arms, among the Asiatic nations as every where else, is absolutely implicated with the goodness of our cause. It is questionable whether, in their barbaric view, our cause had ever before been thoroughly bad—indefensible as have been some of our wars there in the eyes of Christian nations. But in this case, we were wholly wrong; and our honour cannot be now—never can be—retrieved in the estimation of the Affghans. For purposes of our own—foolish purposes, as it happens—we invaded their country, forced on them a sovereign whom they hated, and who had actually no party among them—invited aggression from them by our weakness and supineness—melted away under their aggression—and at last poured in upon them with overwhelming forces—blew up their strongholds, razed their cities, hunted their mountain population "like vermin," burning, slaying, and ravaging—and then withdrew, giving them leave to place upon the throne the very ruler we had come to depose. We may deceive ourselves with vainglory about our honour; but, as long as tradition lasts in Affghanistan, our name will be a mark for hatred and scorn. The men are gone who did this;—Burnes, McNaghten, the military advisers who left their bones in the passes beyond the Punjaub, and Lord Auckland himself. But it does not become those at home who were misled by them—it does not become the most irresponsible of us—to forget this great folly and crime, or to attempt to cover it over with cant about the glory of our arms.

Lord Ellenborough's Proclamation. Annual Register, 1842, p. 257.

When the British force had evacuated Affghanistan, Lord Ellenborough addressed a Proclamation to the rulers and peoples of India, which soon became very celebrated. It is always a mistake to address people of another race, and faith, and language, than our own, in what is supposed to be their way;—to use big metaphors, and fervent exclamations, and make references in a supposed religious tone to things which to the writer are not holy. We all saw the folly and bad taste of this in Napoleon's proclamations, and never believed that they would go down with the Mohammedans and others to whom they were addressed: and now the Governor-General of India made the same mistake at a serious crisis of our affairs in India, when earnestness and simplicity were more than ever necessary in our transactions. The horror excited at home by the apparent sanction given to idolatry in this Proclamation might be exaggerated: but it is certain that affectation, in every way pernicious in so high a functionary, is most eminently so in regard to the most serious of all affairs—matters of religious faith. In 1831, when Shah Soojah wanted aid from Runjeet Singh, the aid was promised on three conditions, one of which was that the sandal-wood gates of the great temple of Juggernaut, which had been carried to Ghuznee, should be restored. The Shah refused this condition, while agreeing to the others, in a way which showed the point to be of some importance; but whether political, military, or religious, we know too little of the native mind to be certain. Lord Ellenborough however ventured

Somnauth Gates.

to use, in this Proclamation, big words of exultation and congratulation about the gates of the temple of Sumnauth being brought back from Ghuznee; and the outcry was great, both on the spot and at home;—some fearing that the government would appear to patronize idolatry, and others showing how the congratulation insulted one part of the inhabitants while coaxing another. The matter was largely discussed in parliament in the session of 1843; and due attention was paid to other acts of coxcombry which seemed to show at once that Lord Ellenborough, with all his heartiness and goodwill and activity and diligence, had not the sobriety of judgment and dignity of manners indispensable in his position. He fraternized with the military in a way very extraordinary in a civilian, and published his military sympathies, so as to give more offence to one set of men than gratification to another. He made showy progresses: and acted out vehemently his idea of Indian government—a government of coaxing and demonstration, rather than of business-like gravity and silent energy. The East India Directors, who held the opposite idea of government, used their power—a power adverted to so rarely as to have been nearly forgotten—of recalling the Governor-General, without the acquiescence of the Administration. The Ministers admitted in parliament that they had remonstrated strongly against this exercise of the Directors' privilege; and it was plain that they were extremely annoyed by it. Though the vote was unanimous, they considered it as great an "indiscretion" as any known in history. It was certainly a serious matter to bring forward the anomaly of the double authority at home: but all anomalies must come into notice sooner or later; and the question was, whether the present occasion was a sufficient justification. The Directors thought it was: the government thought not. As for parliament and the people, they dwelt most on the satisfaction of the recall of Lord Ellenborough. The appointment of his successor was admirable. It united all suffrages of opinion. Sir Henry Hardinge was a soldier, whose military qualifications were indisputable. But he was even better known as a man of a calm, earnest, grave disposition, sound sagacity and conscientious thoughtfulness, excellent habits of business, and most genial and benevolent temper. In him the qualifications of the civil and military ruler seemed to be so singularly united that he appeared to have been in training all his life for the office he was now to fill. It was on the 21st of April, 1844, that Sir R. Peel announced in parliament the recall of Lord Ellenborough; and Sir Henry Hardinge arrived in India in the following July.

Recall of Lord Ellenborough.

Hansard, lxxiv. 340.

Sir Henry Hardinge Governor-General.

Scinde had been annexed to our dominions during Lord Ellenborough's term of office. The agreements we had made with the Ameers, at the commencement of our Affghan enterprise, were not likely to last; and by 1842, we find the Governor-General threatening one of the older generation of the Ameers with deposition if he did not pay up his tribute, and prove himself faithful to the British. There was reason to suspect the Ameers of correspondence with our enemies; and their tribute had fallen into arrear. Sir Charles Napier, who commanded the troops in Scinde, was authorized by the Governor-General to make a new treaty with the Ameers, by which the British authorities believed that equivalent advantages were secured to the two parties. The Ameers, however, thought otherwise,—estimating the pri-

Scinde in 1842.

vileges of their hunting grounds along the Indus more highly than the British ruler conceived of when he stipulated that we should have liberty to cut wood for our steamers along the whole line of the river banks. The treaty was forced upon them; they were irritated; their Beloochee followers were furious, and drove out the Resident who had negotiated the treaty and his few followers from their fort, compelling them to take refuge on board a steamer in the river. The attack was made on the 15th of February. The next day, Sir C. Napier went after the Ameers, to see what they were about, and found them encamped with 22,000 men—seven times the amount of his own force. Early in the morning, he brought his small force to bear upon their great army, routed it, and captured all the enemy's artillery and ammunition, their standards, and their camp, with all that it contained. The Ameers yielded up their swords; and after another victory, Scinde was ours.—Sir C. Napier has never concealed the fact, however, that his conquest of Scinde was determined on before the attack on the Resident, and would have taken place just the same if that had never happened. The battle of Meanee was a great one, valorously and skilfully conducted; and the thanks of parliament were voted to Sir C. Napier and his coadjutors in consideration of it: but we feel no more moral satisfaction in the contemplation of these events, and the thoughts of our new territory, than in considering our Affghan campaign. We have no business in Scinde: and it is a matter for the inhabitants, and not for us, to decide upon, whether they prefer the government of the Ameers, or the "mild sway" which we recommend to them as that of the British government. Probably the Beloochees know too much of our invasion of Affghanistan, and of the condition in which we left it, to have much belief in the mildness and justice of our sway. Meantime, a residence in Scinde is a sort of purgatory to Anglo-Indians. The people are manifestly hostile, and the soil and atmosphere most unfavourable to health. Mutiny, the most dreaded of all events in India, was occasioned in 1844, by the mere order to march to Scinde; and a regiment was ignominiously broken up, on account of its refusal.

Edinburgh Rev. April, 1844, p. 490.

BATTLE OF MEANEE.

Edinburgh Rev. April, 1844, p. 485.

We have not done yet with these melancholy Indian victories, and the questionable rejoicings over them at home. The people of Gwalior, in the Sindia dominion, in the heart of our north-western possessions, were disturbed and riotous. We were bound by treaty to give aid in such a case, under certain requisitions:—we now interfered without such requisition, on the assumption that it would have been made if a young prince had been old enough; and entered the territory, "not as an enemy, but as a friend to the Maharaja." We established "a strong government," according to British ideas, and were about to depart: but the Mahrattas were not disposed to let us march off so quietly. They challenged us to two great battles, in which the British were victors; and Lord Ellenborough, who was near or on the spot, taking the interest of a strong partisan in the conflict, issued more high-sounding proclamations about the glory of British arms on the plains of Sindia, and the blessings of British intervention within the walls of Gwalior.

GWALIOR.

Annual Register, 1843, p. 365.

One melancholy department of the history of the Russian alarmists in India is the fate of the officers who were employed in anti-Russian missions. Lieutenant Wyburd, a young officer of spirit and enterprise, who was sent on a secret mission to Khiva in 1835, was not heard of again till Col. Stoddart, as

WYBURD.

STODDART. Hansard, lxxvi. 104.
CONOLLY.
Eyre's Journal, p. 325.
Spectator, 1844, p. 731.

reported by Dr. Wolff, learned at Bokhara that he had been early murdered.—Col. Stoddart himself was sent on a government mission to Bokhara, and Capt. Conolly, in the place of Lieut. Wyburd, to Khiva and Khohan, with instructions to repair to Bokhara, if sent for by Col. Stoddart. He was so sent for; and there they were executed together, in July, 1843, after long suffering from loathsome imprisonment, and the besetting sense of the precariousness of their life. Those who knew the open-faced, handsome Charles Stoddart, the spirited schoolboy, who counted the days till he could begin being a hero, suffered much under the obscure rumours that floated home from time to time—that he was imprisoned in a well, swarming with reptiles—that he was in high favour, and a professed Mohammedan—that he had been buried alive—that he had been beheaded—that he was still pining in misery.—And those who knew the Conolly family now mourn the death of three brothers, at the outset of a career which was full of promise. Arthur, Edward, and John Conolly marched with Sir J. Keane into Affghanistan in 1839. One died of fever, a captive at Caubool, only six weeks before the release of his fellow-prisoners;—another was shot through the heart in the storming of a fort in the mountains;—and eleven months afterwards, in July, 1843, the last remaining one was executed with Col. Stoddart at Bokhara. These young men were relatives of Sir W. M'Naghten, whose wretched fate has been already before us. The truth was not known, with regard to the Bokhara agents, till 1844, when Dr. Wolff offered his services to go in search of them to Bokhara. From thence he wrote, by order and under the inspection of the Khan, an account of the execution of these officers, for such reasons as such a potentate would be likely to give. It appeared that Stoddart had made a temporary and merely verbal profession of Mohammedanism; but that, unable to live under a mask, even in such a place, he had followed it up with an open avowal of his Christian belief. The reports of the miseries of his imprisonment were but too true.

BORNEO.
JAMES BROOKE.
Brooke's Journal, i. 194.
Brooke's Journals by Mundy.

It is a relief to turn from the dreary scenes in the interior of the Asiatic Continent to a far brighter one in its Malayan Archipelago. In the young days of the existing generation, boys and girls were taught at school that Borneo was the largest island in the world—Australia then being not fully ascertained to be an island. Among the boys so taught might have been James Brooke, whose imagination, as he grew up, dwelt in the Malayan seas. At length, the time came when he found himself sailing in those seas, and thinking what could be done with the piracy there, which so abounds, and is so cruel in its character, as to put a stop to a commerce of extraordinary promise, and to keep the population of the archipelago in a lamentable state of barbarism. James Brooke saw that Borneo produced material for an unlimited commerce: "Within the same given space there are not to be found equal mineral and vegetable riches in any land in the world." He saw that the people, from being barbarous and in a precarious condition as to life and welfare, might be civilized and Christianized. To this enterprise he devoted his life and all his resources. In 1838, he went forth, in a schooner of his own, on a voyage of preliminary exploration. In August 1839, he was well received by the Rajah of Sarawak (on the North-west point of Borneo)—this Rajah being the uncle and deputy of the Sultaun of Borneo. In return for aid against rebels, the Rajah offered him the government of Sarawak—

thus furnishing him with the opportunity he desired on behalf of his scheme. We next see him Rajah of Sarawak, happy in witnessing the striking improvement of the people under his sway in character and fortunes. The great drawback was the pirates, who swarm in all the intricate passages of those seas. The value of Rajah Brooke was by this time seen; and views began to open upon government and every body who knew the story, of his importance in our national history, as the discloser of a vast new commerce, and the simple-minded regenerator of barbaric populations. At the close of the Chinese war, the Dido, and afterwards the Samarung, were ordered forth against the pirates, and broke up several of their strongholds. Mr. Brooke accompanied these expeditions; and in 1845, a further proof in the eyes of the Sultaun of his credit with the British government was given in his appointment to be the agent of his sovereign in Borneo. The Sultaun besought our assistance for the further suppression of piracy, and ceded to us the little island of Labuan, not far from the Bornean capital, as a naval station, on the way between India and China. The Sultaun however was as weak and untrustworthy as such potentates are apt to be. He was won over from the British by intrigue—slew those of his relations who were favourable to them—and countenanced the piratical acts of his own subjects. When he was proceeded against with them, in 1846, he fled into the interior of the island, and would not return. The British officers therefore left with the people a statement of the facts of the case, and of the reasons of their conduct, to be shown to the Sultaun, whenever he should reappear. In all these proceedings, there has been no pretence of conquest for selfish purposes: and thus far, the presence of the British appears to be a pure blessing to the people of Borneo. Rajah Sir James Brooke has since been in England, receiving honours from Queen and people: and he has gone to the East again, unspoiled by homage, and unrelaxing in his energy, to accomplish, as Rajah of Sarawak and Governor of Labuan, the objects which he proposed when plain James Brooke, with no other outward resources than his own little schooner, and the means of negotiating for a cargo of antimony. There is more satisfaction in recording an enterprise so innocent in its conduct and so virtuous in its aim than in making out a long list of Affghan and Scindian victories, with the thanks of sovereign and parliament for a commentary.

MALAYAN PIRATES.

LABUAN CEDED TO BRITAIN.

CHAPTER V.

1842-43.

Condition and Fate of Parties.

WHEN the Ministers met Parliament in the beginning of 1842, their party-strength appeared to be greater than that of any administration for a long course of years. Judging by the numbers in the House of Commons, the invariable preponderance of the Conservative interest in the House of Lords, and the satisfaction throughout the country at the accession of a strong government which understood its work, there was nothing that the Minister could not do;—no reason why he should not play the Dictator—only keeping within the customary forms of Ministerial conduct. But there was something at work stronger than party support and national acquiescence. There was something at work inwardly, in the Minister's own mind, and outwardly among the elements which create human food, that was about to frustrate all calculations, and break up a state of things which appeared to have just settled into permanence. The disintegration of parties which some men had foreseen must happen sooner or later, was now presently to begin. The Whig party was gone—never to be revived. There was no general Reform section to take its place; but the Anti-Corn-law League was now so active, and so considerable in the nation's eye, that any one might see that a Free-trade party would soon take the lead on the Liberal side. On the other side stood the vast Conservative body—apparently all-powerful, but in fact powerful only precisely so far as it had accepted and assimilated liberal principles. Sir Robert Peel and his immediate coadjutors had accepted and assimilated most of these liberal principles; and in them therefore lay the main strength of the party. When they emerged as Liberals from the Conservative host, the rest had but little force, and scarcely any principle of cohesion. The strongest and most united portion of them came into natural antagonism with the Free-trade party, and have struggled on, under perpetual failure, with the title of Protectionists, to this day. The adherents of the Minister composed a sort of party, for as long as the discussion of a free trade policy enabled them to remain separate from the Free traders: but, of course, when the Minister had carried his free trade measures, and taken leave of power, his temporary party could no more maintain an independent existence than a military company, employed on a particular service, can constitute a separate body when the achievement is completed, and they have returned to the main body of the army. To be a Peelite was a most significant position for five years; but when the Minister had accomplished his work of free trade, and retired from power for ever, his staff necessarily dispersed, and no vestige of their separate aggregation remained.

It was a serious thing to be the man by whom the disintegration of parties was to be apparently caused. That such a dissolution should take place, sooner or later, was inevitable—whoever might live or die, or rule or retire;

and that it should take place within a certain limit of time or circumstance was a necessary consequence of the Peace. When Peace was concluded, and when, afterwards, Canning was devoting himself to preserve it, preparation was in fact made for that dissolution of parties which was now to be attributed solely to the action of Canning's political heir. It is because War is retardation that parties live as long as it lasts. It is because Peace is progress that peace is the death-warrant of parties. In a condition of peace, when new questions and progressive policies arise, and arts and inventions flourish which change the condition and relations of whole classes of men, political interests must be subject to renovation, like every thing else; and political representatives will band themselves together in new combinations, and old organizations will dissolve. Seen in advance, this reconstitution of parties for express aims appears a good:—looked back upon from a far future time, it is clearly seen to be a great good:—but at the time, the preliminary dissolution is a grave evil; and it is a serious thing to be the man by whom it is effected. It is a grave evil that the business of the country is ill done, or remains undone, for want of united action in parliament. It is a graver evil that men think ill of each other, as they almost unavoidably do while each is following his own notions, and therefore appearing to be straying wide of any "principle." Oppositions of opinion are respectable in the eyes of antagonists while the opposition is single, and has a centre, round which men gather: but men lose their liberality when they see their neighbours, late comrades of their own, wandering into this or that field of opinion, or forming new conjunctions with old opponents. Then imputations fly abroad, not only of intellectual weakness, but of political dishonour. Mutual confidence is gone; and temper and manners follow. Party violence is bad; but it is nothing to the violence which succeeds a dissolution of parties.—Grave as are these evils, there is yet a graver. In the interval—usually an interval of years—between the disintegration of old parties and the constitution of new ones, while a tentative or accidental fusion takes place here and there, now and then, which gives way again, and proves that such associations cannot be arbitrarily formed, but must grow out of some living principle;—during such an interval, the country is certain to be badly governed. A principled government—a government which had a policy—would inevitably and instantly create parties. The non-existence of parties is an infallible indication that the government is a desultory and not a principled one: and of all misfortunes that can befall a nation, none can be graver than this. Such a government cannot endure for many years, even in the absence of all organized opposition, and in the enjoyment of that self-confidence and apparent strength which arise from its having all its own way, through the unwillingness of political men to displace it till they are provided with a party and a policy, or their inability to displace it by a merely desultory opposition. But, while it lasts, it is a moral curse. During such a term of rule, the political life of the nation languishes—its vital strength oozes away—its able men lose much of their capability—and the ideal of the people sinks from day to day. Their ideal of the statesman sinks to that of the clerk. Instead of principles and enterprises of progress, they learn to look for mere routine, or ingenuity in expedients. They are like the man who has lapsed from his ideal and purpose of self-perfection, and lets himself drift among the chances

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of life. Such, being the natural order of events, has been our experience. After the collapse of the Whigs, Sir R. Peel came in, to govern with power, skill, and the wisdom aptest for the time;—with realities for his materials, and the faculties within him, the reputation around him, and the fates above him, for his agents. But the most serious part of his work was that which he did not appoint to himself, and which he would no doubt have gladly avoided—that of destroying the power amidst which he dwelt and acted by his own explosive force—scattering his own vast party in fragments which could never re-unite.—Upon this has followed the remaining disastrous consequence indicated above—the intervention of a Ministry which could not have held office under the old existence of parties; and which cannot hold it under any parliamentary organization yet to succeed.—It is necessary to look forward thus far, to understand what Sir R. Peel's position was when he met parliament in February, 1842. He then knew no more of his own destiny than others knew. He did not then dream to what an extent he was to be the destroyer of parties by the act of being the achiever of a policy.

Free-traders and Protectionists.

The necessity which ordained this destiny for him suspended the utter disintegration of parties, in order to give him all needful provisional supports. There was the Free-trade party—strong and conspicuous, but necessarily only provisional, because the Free-trade question is exhaustible. When trade is made free in all departments, there is an end. For the same reason the Protectionist party is necessarily a temporary one. It is, from the moment its policy is broken in upon, a mere protesting party, advocating a negation or mere passiveness. The haymaker can protest against a thunder shower only for a time. When the shower is over, there is no more room for protest.—The most clear and serious and significant intimation of a present dissolution and future new constitution of parties arose from that operation of Sir Robert Peel's policy, which must, without leave asked of him or of any body else, abolish the old antagonism between the landed and commercial interests of our country. From the earliest days, these two interests have been supposed to be antagonistic by their very nature. We have seen how an opportunity was lost, at the time of Municipal Reform, of reconciling the two interests so far as to bring the rural districts under a government as good and free as that of the towns. We shall see, throughout this final period of our history, how incessantly and completely parliament took it for granted that the landed and commercial interests always must be in opposition because they always have been. But we shall also see something else. We shall see how the Anti-Corn-law League demonstrated a unity of interests between the agricultural and manufacturing populations; and how the crowning measures of this period provide for their future union, and therefore for the abolition of those party distinctions which have, through our whole parliamentary history, been founded on their division. By the crowning acts of this period, provision is made for the application of science, skill, and economy, in the manufacture of food, just like that which takes place in the manufacture of clothing and utensils. By them, provision is made for a vast increase in the stationary or dwindling agricultural population—an increase which will be the natural consequence of an improved provision of work and demand for labour, as science and skill augment the productiveness and production of the soil. As this goes on—as the increase of the agricultural population once

Approximation of Agricultural and Commercial interests.

more competes with that of the manufacturing, and thereby recovers something of its popular dignity; and as both populations see more and more that their interests are identical and not opposite—that they live under the same great natural laws of society, and flourish most as they are equally regarded by the parliamentary laws of Great Britain—there must be less and less discussion of "the preponderance of the landed interest in parliament" (at least, in the House of Commons), less and less jealousy about class legislation—not only more equality before the law, but more unity under the policy of a future day. There will be then no place for political distinctions on the ground of the opposition between the agricultural and the commercial interests, and whatever may be the vital principles of parties in that day, they will certainly be something quite unconnected with the old antagonism which received its death-sentence in the repeal of the corn-laws.

"Young England."

A little party arose during this period which would, if it could, have protracted this antagonism—both directly, by its agricultural predilections, and indirectly, by perpetuating a social state which had reached its term, or even reviving one which had passed away. No one could wonder that when the great "stream of tendency" was showing its full rapidity, there were many who, rather than trust themselves to it, put back into some little cove, not only to protest at leisure against the sweeping tide, but to gather together on the banks sticks and straws, and meadow-garlands, to make and deck a weir. This was natural; and men did not wonder at it: but it could not be successful; and the "Young England" party therefore did not enable the landed interest to retain its special protection and ancient prerogative for a single hour. The idea of the Young England party, in regard to the condition of the people, was that all would be well if the ancient relation between the rich and the poor could be restored—if the rich could, as formerly, take charge of the poor with a protecting benevolence, and the poor depend upon the rich in a spirit of trust and obedience. What the Tractarian priesthood were at this time requiring of their flocks, the "Young England" politicians were striving for with the working classes; and the spectacle was seen of Sunday sports encouraged, as in the old catholic times; and popular festivals revived, at which young lords and members of parliament pulled off their coats, to play cricket with the labourers, or moved about among the crowd in the park or on the green, in the style of the feudal superior of old. This was amiable and well-intended; but it did not avail in the face of the stern truth that the great natural laws of society have dissolved the old relations between the endowed and the working classes, and brought up a wholly new order of affairs. The landed proprietor is no longer the social parent of the population on his estates—bound to supply them with a certain quantity of food and clothing, and empowered to command a certain amount of labour in return: and much less is the town capitalist responsible for the maintenance of his neighbours. The theory of society now is that the labouring classes are as independent as any others; that their labour is their own disposable property, by which they may make their subsistence in any way that they may think best. At the time we speak of there were two obstacles in the way of the happy realization of this theory, neither of which was recognised by the Young England gentry—one was, that bread and other ordinary provisions were taxed, and the supply of corn restricted by pernicious laws: the other was that, owing to want of

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educational enlightenment and training on the part of the working classes, they brought an undue number to share the wages of labour, so that most or all had too little; and thus their theoretical independence vanished under the pressure of actual want. We shall see how the first obstacle was removed during the period under notice: and we shall see how some attempts to advance the education of the people were frustrated, about the same time. Meanwhile, nothing can be clearer than that the view of the Young England partly was fallacious, in as far as it proposed to improve substantially the condition of the people. It was beneficial and engaging to see the more educated take an interest in the advancement of the less-educated; to see men of pleasure brightening the rare holidays of the men of toil: but it was merely pernicious to hold out false hopes to the suffering, from an impracticable notion of restoring old conditions of protection and dependence, when the one essential thing that it is now necessary for the working-classes to understand is, that (food and labour being released from legal restriction) their condition is in their own hands. As truly as the Reformation took men from under the dictation of the priests, and gave every man's conscience into his own charge, had the growing up of manufactures in our country taken the working classes from under the no longer practicable protection of the landed and moneyed capitalists, and compelled them to protect themselves or perish. If they have enlightenment enough to see and rule their own destiny, they are raised to a condition far above that of the serf-like working-men of old. If they have not that enlightenment, they perish. In this critical period of the history of their class, they were deriving no effectual help from the Young England party of their friends. As for the parliamentary action of the Young Englanders, it was in accordance with the hustings declaration of one of them—Mr. Smythe, the member for Canterbury—that the principles advocated by the "old Tory party" of a century back were still the soundest principles of government.

Spectator, 1843, p. 680.

The Distress.

Serious as was the task of the Minister in every view, the most immediate sympathy was felt for him on account of the fearful state of the people. The distress had now so deepened in the manufacturing districts as to render it clearly inevitable that many must die, and a multitude be lowered to a state of sickness and irritability from want of food; while there seemed no chance of any member of the manufacturing classes coming out of the struggle at last with a vestige of property, wherewith to begin the world again. The pressure had long extended beyond the interests first affected; and, when the new Ministry came into power, there seemed to be no class that was not threatened with ruin. In Carlisle, the Committee of Inquiry reported that a fourth of the population was in a state bordering on starvation—actually certain to die of famine, unless relieved by extraordinary exertions. In the woollen districts of Wiltshire, the allowance to the independent labourer was not two-thirds of the *minimum* in the workhouse; and the large existing population consumed only a fourth of the bread and meat required by the much smaller population of 1820. In Stockport, more than half the master spinners had failed before the close of 1842: dwelling-houses, to the number of 3,000, were shut up; and the occupiers of many hundreds more were unable to pay rates at all. Five thousand persons were walking the streets in

Spectator, 1842, p. 27.

Spectator, 1842, p. 32.

Spectator, 1842, p. 537.

compulsory idleness: and the Burnley guardians wrote to the Secretary of State that the distress was far beyond their management: so that a government Commissioner and government funds were sent down without delay. At a meeting at Manchester, where humble shop-keepers were the speakers, anecdotes were related which told more than declamation. Rent-collectors were afraid to meet their principals, as no money could be collected. Provision-dealers were subject to incursions from a wolfish man, prowling for food for his children, or from a half-frantic woman with her dying baby at her breast; or from parties of ten or a dozen desperate wretches, who were levying contributions along the street. The linen-draper told how new clothes had become out of the question among his customers, and they bought only remnants and patches, to mend the old ones. The baker was more and more surprised at the number of people who bought half-pennyworths of bread. A provision-dealer used to throw away outside scraps of bacon; but now, respectable customers of twenty years' standing bought them in pennyworths, to moisten their potatoes. These shop-keepers contemplated nothing but ruin, from the impoverished condition of their customers. While rates were increasing beyond all precedent, their trade was only one-half or one-third, or even one-tenth, what it had been three years before. In that neighbourhood, a gentleman who had retired from business in 1833, leaving a property worth £60,000 to his sons, and who had, early in the distress, become security for them, was showing the works, for the benefit of the creditors, at a salary of £1 a week. In families where the father had hitherto earned £2 per week, and laid by a portion weekly, and where all was now gone but the sacks of shavings they slept on, exertions were made to get "blue milk" for the children to moisten their oatmeal with; but soon they could have it only on alternate days; and soon water must do. At Leeds, the pauper stone-heap amounted to 150,000 tons; and the guardians offered the paupers 6*s*. per week for doing nothing, rather than 7*s*. 6*d*. per week for stone-breaking. The millwrights and other trades were offering a premium on emigration, to induce their "hands" to go away. At Hinckley, one-third of the inhabitants were paupers: more than a fifth of the houses stood empty; and there was not work enough in the place to employ properly one-third of the weavers. In Dorsetshire, a man and his wife had for wages 2*s*. 6*d*. per week and three loaves: and the ablest labourers had 6*s*. or 7*s*. In Wiltshire, the poor peasants held open air meetings after work—which was necessarily after dark. There, by the light of one or two flaring tallow candles, the man or the woman who had a story to tell stood on a chair, and related how their children were fed and clothed in old times—poorly enough, but still, so as to keep body and soul together; and now how they could no how manage to do it. The bare details of the ages of their children, and what the little things could do, and of the prices of bacon and bread, and calico and coals, had more pathos in them than any oratory heard elsewhere.

Spectator, 1842, p. 585.

Spectator, 1842, p. 610.

Spectator, 1842, p. 630.

Spectator, 1842, p. 657.

As for how this misery was borne—it was, on the whole, endured with an incredible and inexplicable patience. The most comforting truth yielded by this dreadful trial was that large numbers of the manufacturing class of labourers had learned thoroughly something that it much concerned them to know:—that there was no such thing in existence as an unlimited wages'

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fund which was intercepted by the cruelty of capitalists. The great majority of Lancashire operatives showed, for instance, that they knew that their employers were sinking into ruin, and had nothing to give, but out of their dwindling capital. But hunger is maddening—not only by the bitter thoughts that it calls up, but by the actual irritation of the brain that it causes; and among the hundreds of thousands of famishing men, and women, and children, some disorder and rebellion could not but arise. Owing to the incomparable management of the Home Secretary, Sir James Graham, the evil and danger were reduced to the smallest possible amount: but there was enough to keep the Ministry in a state of perpetual anxiety, and to make the Queen's heart sink within her, in the security of her palace. What the larger measures of the government were, we shall presently see. From the Home Office information the most extensive and accurate was gathered; aid was administered, where it could really avail, with the utmost quietness; preparation was made for the instant repression of violence where it was likely to arise; and the proper distinction was made between those who suffered the most severely and patiently, and those Chartists who were, at this time, very troublesome. They had got into the hands of protectionist guides or agents, and broke in upon free trade meetings, and denounced free trade in corn, and stirred up precisely those among the working classes who were suffering least — the pitmen of the coal districts, and the Welsh miners. There were riots of nailers and miners at Dudley and Stourbridge, and tumult over the whole district, requiring the active services of the military. The rioters resisted a reduction of wages, and hustled some of the masters; as did other rioters in Wales, where a gentleman of property had a narrow escape with his life. In the Potteries, a force of 6000 malcontents, spread over an extent of seven miles, and occasionally committing violence on recusant masters or men, kept Staffordshire in alarm. Troops were encamped on the Pottery race-course, and magistrates tried to conciliate and mediate; but with little effect. In Manchester, the influx of malcontents became alarming in August, 1842. Mills were stopped, and, in some, the windows broken, and machinery injured. The Riot Act was read four times in one day, and prisoners were taken by scores at once. A large attendance of military was necessary, as there were threats of tearing up the railways, and cutting the gas pipes. At one time, all the chief manufacturing towns in the district seemed to be in the hands of the mob. Presently a royal proclamation came from London, and troops from London and from Ireland; and then it appeared that Chartists from a distance were at the bottom of the disturbances. It was well understood afterwards that these risings were a great affliction to the best informed of the suffering operatives, who were aware that their misery had no immediately political origin, and could not be remedied by political movements.

Riots.

Spectator, 1842, p. 779.

The rioters sent bodies of their men to the Yorkshire towns; and sometimes letters—laconic and significant—detailing progress, and one ending with "We get plenty to eat: the shops are open: they give us what we want." Some disturbances ensued; but nothing so formidable as in Lancashire, and in the Potteries, where now the malcontents were gutting and burning dwelling-houses. In the midst of their violence, they gave a lame clergyman "ten minutes' law" to walk away, but refused the entreaties of a lady that they would

Spectator, 1842, p. 800.

spare the house, leaving her to be thankful for personal safety. Three men were shot dead by the soldiery at Burslem, and several wounded. Lady Peel was assured by an anonymous correspondent that Drayton Manor would be burned down. A guard was procured; but no attack was made. A clergyman at Leeds was warned by approaching rioters that they meant to sleep in his church on a certain night; he intimated his intention of preaching to them all night; and they did not appear. In a very short time, the Chartist strangers—men whom nobody knew, dropping in from a distance—showed a depth of design and an extent of rapacity which disgusted the Lancashire operatives; and the disorder subsided gradually through the last weeks of August and the beginning of September.

Morning Chronicle, August, 1842.

Morning Post, August, 1842.

REBECCA AND HER CHILDREN.

To these succeeded the strangest series of riots that has occurred in our time. This was a season for teaching the mischievous lesson, that insurrectionary violence would obtain redress of grievances to which no other method of complaint could draw attention. Urgent complaints had long been made by the inhabitants of the rural districts of Wales of their road-taxes. After having paid rates, they had again to pay heavy tolls on the by-roads—so heavy as sometimes to absorb the profit of the small produce the humble farmers were carrying to market, and to make their manure more costly than it was worth. In 1839, a particularly unpopular set of gates, which the people believed to be illegally erected, were pulled down, on the borders of Caermarthenshire and Pembrokeshire. The Magistrates declared their intention of over-ruling the trustees about the re-erection of these gates; some of them became trustees for the purpose; and the gates were never put up again. This victory dwelt on the minds of the rude and primitive people of the district, who had notions of their own, knew little of the world outside, and spoke nothing but Welsh. They held meetings in bycorners, or remote places of their wild district, and organized their remarkable conspiracy. They resolved to destroy all gates and toll-houses that they considered objectionable, and to persist till the trustees could not afford to put up any more. Their first enterprise had been a sort of frolic—the gates having been pulled down in open day, by a mob with uncovered faces. They would be more serious and cautious henceforth. Out of the many texts of Scripture which mention a gate—the oriental gate whose significance was not dreamed of by these simple Welshmen—they chose, Gen. xxiv. 60: "And they blessed Rebekah, and said unto her—Let thy seed possess the gate of those which hate them." They chose a chief, dressed him in woman's clothes, put a large, disguising bonnet on his head, and named him Rebecca, calling his followers Rebecca's daughters. The Rebecca, stalking about in petticoats, or riding astride with streaming cloak or shawl, was so ubiquitous, that there could be little doubt of the name being given to any leader of an expedition against the gates. In the winter of 1842 and 1843, Rebecca and her daughters began their work; and that winter will never be forgotten while tradition endures in Wales. By day, all was quiet enough. The most vigilant of the constabulary could see nothing but the ordinary sights of the roads and fields—no groups in consultation, no mysterious looks—nothing but jogging riders who duly paid their tolls, and people about their proper business in their fields or their home. If there was a suspicion of an intended attack on any parti-

Times Reporter, June, 1843.

Annual Register, 1843, p. 258.

cular gate, that gate was sure to be left in peace; and while it was watched, half a dozen were levelled at some opposite point of the country; in one case, within a quarter of a mile of the assembled magistrates. If the toll-keepers looked out apprehensively, they were sure not to see any approaching light or other token. If they went outside to listen, nobody came near. But, when they were forgetful or asleep, they were roused by the blare of a multitude of cow-horns, and the popping of a dozen guns: their door was burst open, and they saw a crowd, some on horses, and some on foot—some in women's clothes, and others with veiled faces—with the flaring torches, and the glittering saws and hatchets. The toll-takers must move out their furniture or lose it; and strong hands helped to carry bed and table and utensils into the field or the dry ditch, while others were sawing off the gate-posts close to the ground, and chopping up the gate. Then off came the roof of the toll-house, and down came the walls, and up came the flags of the very floor; the road was made clear for passengers; and then the uncouth creatures leaped on their horses again, hallooed, blew their horns, fired their guns, and galloped off to some distant point, which they would approach in dead stillness, as in this case. The toll-taker and his wife usually found themselves left alone under the stars in a very few minutes after their first start in bed, or by their warm fire-side. Latterly, it was usual for the soldiers to come galloping up, as soon as Rebecca and her children were completely out of sight and hearing. After an instant's pause, to learn which way the rioters were gone, the soldiers would be off at full speed, arriving perhaps to find another toll-keeper and his wife under the stars, and Rebecca just out of sight again. Or, more probably, they missed their way; for the peasantry competed with each other in misdirecting the dragoons. Thus, in the county of Caermarthen, nearly 80 gates were destroyed; and in Pembrokeshire and Cardiganshire few remained. Those few were the old-established gates, which were not meddled with. Those which were most zealously destroyed were the new gates put up on by-roads leading to lime-kilns. The small farmers burned their own lime for manure; and since the new contractors for the tolls had insisted on putting up gates on the way to the kilns, the farmers had to pay 1*s*. for their load of stone, another for their load of coal, and again another for their lime when they brought it away from the kiln. Their little farming could not be made to answer in this way. For some time, this seemed to be all, and probably was all, that was comprehended in the movement.

Times Reporter, June, 1843.

Chartist Intervention.

But when risings were taking place elsewhere, Chartist agitators went into South Wales, to see whether they could not make comrades of Rebecca and her children. The aspect of the movement presently changed. The police were surrounded and disarmed, and in one case marched to a magistrate's house, and compelled to pull down a wall. Threatening letters were distributed, declaring that Rebecca meant to abolish justice fees and tithes; and to pull down the workhouses, and to compel a reduction of rents. The alarmed and perplexed magistrates besought aid from government; and a strong body of troops, and another of police, were sent down. But both troops and police were baffled at every turn. Magistrates' houses were fired into; and Caermarthen workhouse was half-destroyed, precisely according to previous threats. The mob marched into the town, to the number of some thousands, the flaunting Rebecca being conspicuous among them. Among the insignia carried were brooms, wherewith to sweep the foundations of the workhouses and toll-houses. The mob had burst the gates, and were gutting the house—the governor clanging the alarm-bell—when the soldiers arrived—two of their horses dropping dead from fatigue. Several hundreds of the rioters were captured; and a few slightly wounded. From the time that the Chartist emissaries directed Rebecca's movements, nothing went well with her. At the meetings in the hollows of the hills, the Chartist toryism came out. One speaker denounced the poor law, saying it was the proper fruit of the foolish and mischievous Reform Bill; and here, as every where else, the tory-chartists opposed free trade, and announced the ruin of all farmers if the corn laws were repealed. All now went wrong. One night, Rebecca's horse was shot, and her gun was wrested out of her hand. She galloped 100 yards, when her horse fell dead, and in the darkness of the night she escaped: but at last two of her "children" were captured in the act of assaulting a toll-house. They were young farm labourers. The gate was, on this occasion, saved. This was on the 24th of August. On the 6th of September, Rebecca's horse was again shot (after the destruction of the gate), and six of her followers captured, two of whom were severely wounded. Before the month was out, incendiarism began. A band of armed and disguised men went from farm to farm of an active magistrate, and burned his stacks—being lighted across the fields by the fires they had kindled behind them. Another magistrate, coming home at night, found his stacks burning, the wood full of armed men, and the plugs of his fish-ponds drawn, so that no water could be had.—Next came murder.—There was a time in the movement when Rebecca was genial, with some little mirth in her mood, and much kindness. In the spring she had let a toll-house stand, because there was a sick child within. Now, in the autumn, she was grown diabolical—so diabolical, that men lost their manhood under the dread of her enmity.—An old woman, above 70, kept a gate which she knew to be doomed. She had been warned to leave it; and at three in the morning, one Sunday, she was awakened by the burning of her thatch. She ran to a cottage near, to ask the stout fellow who lived there to come and put out the fire;—"There was not much," she said. He dared not put his head out; but asked her in. She ran back to save her furniture. Rebecca's children came up, and fired the thatch again. The old creature called out that she knew them: and they shot her dead. What followed made some people talk of leaving the country, and others of the advantage of martial law. The coroner's jury, privately owning themselves afraid to do their duty, returned a verdict "That the deceased died from the effusion of blood into the chest, which occasioned suffocation. But from what cause is to this jury unknown."

1842-43.

Spectator, 1843, p. 583.

INCENDIARISM. Spectator, 1843, p. 869. 875.

MURDER.

Annual Register, 1843, p. 262.

This was not to be borne. A Royal Proclamation called on all men to do their duty. A Special Commission was sent down to try the prisoners; and, better than either of these, another Commission was appointed to inquire into the grievances of the malcontents. Both commissions were conducted in the best spirit. The addresses of the judge, Baron Gurney, are like the admonitory rebukes of a parent to children hard driven into fault: and indeed, there was pity in all minds towards the culprits—the opinion of the other commission

SPECIAL COMMISSION.

already getting known—that poverty and hardship were at the bottom of the Rebecca riots. Three men sentenced to transportation issued a penitent admonitory address to their countrymen; and their relations and intimate friends offered themselves for special constables. The light sentences of imprisonment on others of the rioters, and the discharge without trial of many more, were believed to be owing, not only to many pleading Guilty, but to an understanding that the peace was to be kept henceforth.

Spectator, 1843, p. 1036.

Commission of Inquiry.

The Commission of Inquiry held sittings from place to place; and everywhere the inhabitants showed themselves eager to state their grievances. The conclusions of the Commissioners were that the hardships under the existing turnpike-system were real and intolerable; and that the outbreak was immediately occasioned by their pressure on the farmers who were already in difficulties from a succession of bad harvests. From other causes, there was more hardship than usual—the long-continued distress having extended its effects into the remotest corners of the principality.—In the next Session of Parliament, a Bill, framed on the Report of the Commissioners, passed both Houses without controversy—the leading principle of which was the consolidation of Turnpike Trusts in South Wales. The constitution of the new Executive Board, and the arrangements for clearing off the debts under the old system, were everywhere approved; and Rebecca's insurrection ended in complete success as to its original objects. While all minds were soothed and pleased by the fine temper shown in the trials, all felt that the utmost leniency was absolutely indispensable, while the government Commissioners were discovering the grievances of the people to be real and intolerable, and to have been complained of in vain for many years.

South Wales Turnpike Act.

Hansard, lxxvi. 1941.

Troubles in Ireland.

Of the excited state of Scotland during this period of dread and disorder, some account must be given hereafter. And also of Ireland, where O'Connell was triumphing and boasting the more offensively, the more distress and disaster spread in England and Wales.—He avowed the "sentiment," that "England's adversity is Ireland's opportunity." Opportunity for what? was the question asked by a multitude; but a larger multitude on Irish ground did not think of asking the question. If the demand of O'Connell and Ireland had been for any definable reform or measure or grant, long asked and denied, the declaration might have been excusable, like the action of Rebecca and her children. But it was not so; and a subsequent chapter will show the full iniquity of O'Connell's present proceedings, and of the motto which he caused to be heard in the drawing-rooms at Windsor Castle, and under the thatch of the meanest Irish cabin.

The Court.

And how was it at Windsor and in London during this dreary and tedious season of adversity? When the distress set in, the Queen and her Court were engaged in a perpetual round of gaieties. Some newspapers, which had a wide circulation among the working classes, now began the practice of printing in parallel columns the descriptions of fancy dresses at the Queen's balls, and accounts of royal purchases, banquets, and pleasures, on the one hand; and the coroners' inquests on starved persons, reports from the distressed districts, returns of mortality, and the like, on the other. The device wrought powerfully; and some portentous symptoms of a new royal unpopularity appeared. It is believed that Sir R. Peel did the duty of a faithful Minister;

not rousing or augmenting the fears of the Queen, but giving the counsel which the time required. In the midst of magnificent preparations for the christening of the Prince of Wales, it is believed that the Minister gave the advice to make haste, and to retrench. The King of Prussia presently arrived: the Queen and Court appeared in Paisley and other home manufactures; and, as soon as the christening was over, a comparative sobriety settled down over the Court, and not even the most querulous had any future cause to blame the amount or the nature of the royal expenditure.

Alarms.

In such times it is—if they last long enough to wear our faith and patience—that we see most curiously revealed the "fears of the brave and follies of the wise." Accidents always intervene to aggravate the fear; and the undue fear perverts the wisdom of the wisest. It was during this season that two of the pistol shots which have been mentioned before, were fired at the Queen. Both were pranks of ignorant and foolish youths, and appear to have had no immediate connexion with the discontents of the time. But they went to enhance the impression of dread; and it was understood that the ladies of the Court—and perhaps not only the ladies—were living in a painful state of apprehension of coming evils. While all was gloomiest, in January, 1843, an event happened which might almost justify any increase of panic. Sir R. Peel's private secretary, Mr. Edward Drummond, was shot in the street, and died of the wound. It was at first supposed that he was mistaken for the Premier; and, in a season such as this, which was manifestly unsettling weak wits, it was some time before Sir R. Peel was considered safe. Two policemen in plain clothes followed him in the streets; and the newspapers, which were all aware of the fact, considerately forbore (all but one) to notice the fact. Mr. Drummond's murderer, however, was proved a lunatic, and lodged for life in an asylum. Yet, there was mischief in the occurrence. Drunken men were heard to threaten the Queen and the Minister; and infirm brains began to work in that direction, as we see by the Police reports of the time.

Murder of Mr. Drummond.

Something worse than the "fears of the brave" were "the follies of the wise." Grave statesmen, honourable gentlemen, benevolent Christians, began to conceive of conduct in their adversaries, and to utter imputations, which could never have come into their heads at an ordinary time. The Anti-Corn-law League had not yet had time to win the respect and command the deference which it was soon to enjoy: but it was known to be organized and led by men of station, character, and substance—men of enlarged education, and of that virtuous and decorous conduct which distinguishes the middle class of England. Yet it was believed—believed by men of education, by men in parliament, by men in attendance on the government—that the Anti-Corn-law League sanctioned assassination, and did not object to carry its aims by means of it. This is, perhaps, the strongest manifestation of the tribulation of the time. In the midst of it a strange and mournful scene took place in the House of Commons—a scene which would willingly be forgotten, but that the Spirit of History must forget nothing which indicates or affects the course of events. Sir R. Peel was ill, harassed with public anxieties, and deeply wounded in his private feelings, by the murder of his secretary, who was also his intimate friend. Mr. Cobden was then little known—at least, by his opponents. He was known as the chief man of the League; and the League was believed to

1842-43. patronize assassination. In the heat of debate, at two hours past midnight of the 17th of February, the Premier charged Mr. Cobden with exposing him to fatal consequences, by declaring him "personally responsible" for the misery of the people. Mr. Cobden was so confounded by the outrageous charge, and so borne down by the passionate and insulting clamour of the majority of the House, that he could not do himself justice. Some years afterwards, the two great men came to an understanding, and did themselves and one another justice. But that such an incident could have occurred shows that it was no time for judging the greatest men too strictly. If it was a time when a gaunt workman might be lightly dealt with for snatching a loaf, and a Welsh peasant for sawing off a gate-post, it was also one which bespoke consideration for perplexed and anxious statesmen.

Such was the period that was setting in—such were the storms that were driving up—when the Peel ministry had to come forward with measures of relief for the finances of the country.

CHAPTER VI.

1842.

Opening of the Session.

THE new Administration insisted, as we have seen, on taking the recess for the consideration of the financial affairs of the nation, instead of declaring their policy within a month, as the ex-ministers would have taunted them into doing. The present ministers were men of business, disposed and able to make their measures thorough and complete of their kind—fit to be offered to parliament—fit to pass through parliament—fit to work in practice afterwards: and the interval between September and February was short enough for the preparation of such a group of measures as was now to be set up against the debts and distresses of the country. There was much speculation and conjecture as to the purposes of ministers during this interval; but ministers were profoundly secret: and none were further from anticipating what was coming than the heads of the Whig party. At a dinner in London in November, where all the guests but two were personal friends and adherents of the late ministers, one of the two (who was not a party man at all) was asked what he supposed Peel and Goulburn would do. The reply was, "Why, Peel has told you two things which, put together, show you what he means to do. He says he is not going to repeal the corn laws; and he says he will put an end to our sinking into debt. Therefore, he must be going to lay on an income tax." The uproar of ridicule was loud; and the guest was told on all hands that he was talking nonsense, and that he little knew Peel if he supposed him to have the "courage" to lay on an income tax. His answer was, "You asked my opinion, and you have it. Time will show if I am wrong." It seems surprising now that so few should have anticipated a positive policy—a set of broad measures, which should be at once remedial and progressive: but too many minds had become weak and superficial about political affairs, under the incapable rule of the Whigs; and those who went into society found little but a vague expectation of some relief from shiftings and changes under the heads of the debt, and some putting on and taking off among the taxes.—Meantime, nothing occurred in the way of disclosure till January—a short time before parliament met, when the Duke of Buckingham seceded from the ministry. This was understood as a sign that something was going to be done with the corn laws that the Duke of Buckingham did not like. The farmers were uneasy. The Whigs were delighted—hoping that there was already a division in the cabinet. The Speech was eagerly listened to, at the opening of parliament on the 3rd of February. The numbers who thronged the House of Lords were unusually great, because of the new interest which surrounded the Queen after the recent birth of the Prince of Wales, and because the King of Prussia was present, and the ceremony was conducted with unusual splendour: but there was more eagerness

Secession of the Duke of Buckingham.

1842.

still to hear how the appalling distresses of the country would be noticed, and our financial difficulties be met.

The Queen's Speech. Hansard, lx. 4.

In the Speech, the recognition of the distress was emphatic; and so was that of "the exemplary patience and fortitude" of the sufferers. The evil of the annual deficit, now become so familiar, was pointed out as one which must immediately be put an end to; and the tone of decision about this showed that some practical method of recovery was about to be proposed. Parliament was also requested to attend to the laws affecting the importation of corn, and of other articles of foreign production.—What "other articles?" people asked each other, and how many of them? Was there to be an extension of free trade? Could any considerable sacrifice of import duties be contemplated at a time when the first consideration was how to deal with our annual deficit? The debate on the Address did not detain men long from the answers to these questions. There was a seriousness and business-like character about the Speech, and the demeanour of Ministers in meeting parliament, which rebuked captiousness, and put a check upon waste of time in party recrimination. The Whig leaders were more amiable than they had been in the autumn; and some taunting observations from Lord John Russell, easily answered, and a curious piece of abuse of the Sliding Scale from Lord Melbourne—as free and easy as if he had never deprecated attacks upon it—were the only hostile manifestations on the part of the Whigs. The Address echoed the Speech, and passed quickly. The Premier gave notice that the Budget would be brought forward early. Ministers were ready with it now; but they thought it due to the country to go into the Corn question first, with which their remaining measures would be connected, as speedily as possible. The Corn question was to come on on the next Wednesday, February 9th.

Hansard, lx. 58.
Hansard, lx. 20.

The Corn Question.

All that day, the avenues to the House were thronged; and the moment the doors were opened, there was a rush which filled the strangers' gallery. As the Horse Guards' clock struck four, the head of a remarkable procession appeared from the Strand. Six hundred Anti-corn-law delegates were marching down to the House, where they demanded admission to the lobby, and were refused, on the ground of the obstruction that would thus be caused to the entrance of members. While the members were entering, therefore, the strangers lined the way in Palace-yard, and greeted each member as he passed with a hint or exhortation about the repeal of the Corn laws. They felt their full importance: and it was really great. Already, since the meeting of parliament, 994 petitions for the repeal of the Corn laws had been presented: and these delegates were the representatives of some millions of the Queen's best subjects. When they had duly impressed themselves on the passing members, they marched back again up Parliament-street, and, at Privy Gardens, they met Sir R. Peel in his carriage, on his way to the House. He looked very grave; and his countenance did not relax when he heard the cries all round him for the downfall of the bread tax. This was an anxious day for the Minister—the last great occasion of his speaking from a false position—from too dubious and unsatisfied a mind within to enable him cheerfully to brave unpopularity without.

Spectator, 1842, p. 151.

The Ministerial Scheme.

He rose to speak about five o'clock. The Duke of Cambridge and many other peers were present, and the House was crowded throughout, and yet particularly still till towards the close of the speech, when the Minister had to ask for the attention of his hearers. There was no confidence in his manner: it was nervous and uneasy. There was no argument in his speech; it was mainly one of clear exposition of the government proposals, and vague deprecation of "reliance on foreigners" for the food of the nation. He even condescended to the statement that in ordinary years the nation had enough, or nearly enough, of home-grown corn for its consumption, and that it was therefore only on extraordinary occasions that we need to resort to foreigners for any considerable quantity of food. In a little while, he was to see, as clearly as any man, that it was not for him or any one to say when the people had enough, or how long our annual produce would serve our increasing numbers; and that the occasional character of our demand for foreign corn was precisely that which made the commerce an evil instead of a good. But now his mind was entering upon its final transition stage—something of the bitterness of which he had known before. The joy of the agricultural party at finding that they were not to be bereft of their Sliding Scale could give him no pleasure in the present state of his mind. The derisive cheers of the Opposition were clamorous when it appeared that nothing more was proposed than a reduction of duty, and to make the Sliding Scale really slide instead of jumping: and the Whigs were delighted to find that the Minister had failed to come up to their own point—of an 8*s*. fixed duty. Their cheers were caught up by the Anti-Corn-law crowd without: and the Minister, supposed to be the strongest since the Peace, found himself almost overwhelmed on the announcement of the first of his schemes.

Spectator, 1842, p. 145.

Hansard, lx. 214.

The Ministerial plan proposed to preserve the principle of the corn duty varying inversely with the price of corn in the market: and the existing system of averages was to be retained—if for no other reason, because it was the basis of the recent Tithe Commutation scheme. But some security was provided by changes in the mode and instrumentality of procuring the averages, and yet more by extending the area from which the averages were to be derived. Instead of the 150 towns named in the Corn bill, many of which were insignificant in comparison with new towns that had risen up, every considerable town which had a corn market was to be named in the new Act, to contribute to the averages.—As for the main point—the reduction of duties—much fraud and other evil had been found to arise from the suddenness of the reduction of duty when corn was at the dearest. Thus, when wheat was at 70*s*. the duty was 13*s*. 8*d*.; and it fell to 10*s*. 8*d*. when wheat was only 1*s*. dearer. Yet worse, when wheat was again 1*s*. dearer, the duty sank 4*s*., so as to be 6*s*. 8*d*. at 72*s*., and 2*s*. 8*d*. at 73*s*.; and above that, only 1*s*. The inducement to corn merchants to hold back corn, in order to enhance its price, and escape all but the lightest duties, was thus very strong; and the injury was great to the government, which lost much duty; to the home-grower, by causing an over-supply in the market precisely when prices reached their highest point; and above all, to the consumer, who had to pay the high prices thus artificially caused. This was the evil to be redressed. In coming to the mode of redress, Sir R. Peel made the agricultural faces in the House very grave by saying that he did not believe it to be for the interest of the farmer

THE CORN BILL OF 1842.

Hansard, lx. 218–229.

1842.

Its Reception.

that prices should reach higher than the range from 54*s.* to 58*s.* The manufacturing interest were not surprised at his seeing no good in prices being lower than that range: and he made both classes understand that he was as far as possible from supposing that the price of home-grown corn could be fixed, or even indicated, by any thing that could be done in parliament. This being understood, it was now proposed that the duty should never exceed 20*s.*, and that this duty should remain till the price of wheat passed 50*s.* When it was 51*s.* the duty was to be 19*s.* Then it was to be 18*s.* while the price mounted through three shillings—that is, till wheat was at 55*s.*, when the duty would be 17*s.* This "rest" in the slide was to be repeated when the price was 66*s.* and the duty 6*s.* The price must be 69*s.* before the duty sank to 5*s.*—Such was the scheme, proposing a very considerable reduction of duties, and of "protection" to the home-grower; but somewhat easing the reduction by amending in his favour the action of the scale. It was in itself no great matter: it did not touch the vices of the system, or introduce any remedial principle: but it told plainly enough, to all that had ears to hear, that the Corn laws were doomed. The dubious countenances of land-owners in both Houses said so. The shakes of the head at market tables said so. The embarrassed bearing of the Minister said so, to those who saw his position and his course more clearly than he did himself. The cheers of the Delegates, outside the House, before assembling to concert new measures of agitation, said so: and, as for the newspapers, some of them said so very plainly.

Annual Register, 1842, p. 53.

It was the 7th of April before the Bill passed the Commons: and great was the excitement in the interval. The farmers were at first disposed to be as angry as the manufacturers; but they were advised by their friends in both Houses to be quiet, as it was certain that they could get nothing better than this Bill by opposition, and they might get something worse. The League called meetings in London, and all the large provincial towns, where the imposition of any tax whatever on food was denounced, and declared to be doomed to extinction. At these meetings, Lord John Russell's proposed policy made no progress. A fixed duty was scouted as emphatically as any moveable duty. In some manufacturing towns, Sir R. Peel was burned in effigy. He had gratified nobody—satisfied very few, and offended a vast majority of the nation: so he might well look grave by anticipation, when he met the delegates by his own gate as he was going down to the House.

Amendment Rejected.
Hansard, lx. 620.
Hansard, lx. 1082.
Hansard, lx. 1168.

The first thing the House did was to sanction the principle of the Sliding Scale, by rejecting Lord John Russell's resolution against it, by a majority of 123 in a House of 575 members, after a debate of four nights. Yet Mr. Villiers brought forward his promised motion against any corn duty whatever; and this was debated for five nights more, and lost by a majority of 393 to 90. A scale of duties proposed by Mr. Christopher, as superior to the Ministerial one, was rejected in committee by a majority of 306 to 104. Lord Ebrington opposed the second reading on the 8th of March, but was outvoted by a large majority. The debates had now become languid and wearisome. Every body knew what would be said on all hands, and that the Bill could not but pass, after the rejection of Lord John Russell's resolution: and it was an universal relief when the Corn bill of 1842—the last defiance of the great natural laws of society, in the shape of a sliding scale of food duties—was sent up to the other House.

Hansard, lxii. 75.

Hansard, lxii. 722.

Hansard, lxii. 804.

BILL BECOMES LAW.

Hansard, lxii. 1234.

There Lord Melbourne followed the course of Lord John Russell in the Commons—but in his own characteristic manner. He declared that all sound argument, all good sense, all clear reason, all the well-understood interests of mankind, were on the side of free trade; but that all usage, all prejudices, and nearly all feelings, were in favour of protective duties. He therefore dissented from Lord Brougham's proposed resolutions in favour of a perfectly free trade in corn, and moved a declaration in favour of a fixed duty on its importation. This was negatived by a majority of 117 to 49: and Lord Brougham's, in a thin House, by 87 to 6. Lord Stanhope, on the other, the ultra-protectionist, side, would have had the Bill read that day six months: but the day of his party was over; and the Bill became law on the 29th of April.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT.

In the meantime, the all-important statement had been made — the statement of the measures by which Ministers proposed to retrieve the financial affairs of the nation, to arrest its course into annually-deepening debt, and give a new and healthy stimulus to manufactures and commerce. The statement took the House and the people by surprise—not after the manner which had become a Whig device, but by the breadth and comprehensiveness of the measures proposed. It was remembered that measures proposed by a Peel Cabinet were always fit to be carried, as far as their preparation was concerned: so that, if passed at all, they would be passed complete; and men saw their whole prospect when the Ministerial proposals were laid before them. It is seldom that so wide and new a prospect is opened before a people as on the present occasion: and it was indeed time that the most vigorous and effectual efforts were made for the redemption of our sinking state. It was at this date that it became clear that the Chinese war was not over; and our deadly misfortunes in India were beginning to open upon minds at home. Though the East India Company bore the expenses of wars which concerned their own territory, it was impossible to say what might not be the drain upon the national treasury in consequence of the Affghan enterprise.

Hansard, lxi. 430.

We have seen something of the daily-deepening distress and trouble throughout our own islands; and, of all disheartening things, the Minister had to begin his government under a certain deficiency of two millions and a half for the year, and upwards of ten millions for the last six years. The excuse of the Whigs for leaving affairs in this condition was, that they could not help it. They declared that, from this consideration, and a principle of religious submission to misfortunes sent by Providence, their minds were calm, and their consciences clear. Such was their declaration. It is well for the British nation that Sir R. Peel's was somewhat different—in spirit as in terms. Which was the nobler, the more religious, and the more benevolent, the event soon showed. Sir R. Peel's declaration was as follows; and it aided his after-work, by spreading stimulus and hope over the country, and rousing the best spirit of the nation. On the 11th of March it was that, before opening his scheme, he intimated the spirit in which it was prepared.

Hansard, lxi. 423.

"No one," he said, "can feel more than I do the importance and the extent of the duty that devolves on me. No one can be more conscious than

1842. I am how disproportionate are my intellectual powers to the proper performance of my task; but, Sir, I should be unworthy of the trust committed to me —I should be unfit to stand here in my place as the Minister of the British Crown—if I could feel disheartened or discouraged—if I could entertain any thing but composure and contentedness of mind—any thing, I may say, but that buoyancy and alacrity of spirit which ought to sustain every public man when entering upon the discharge of a great public duty; conscious that he is actuated by no motives that are not honourable and just, and feeling a deep and intimate conviction that, according to the best conclusion of his imperfect and fallible judgment, that which he intends to propose will be conducive to the welfare, I may say, essential to the prosperity, of the country." So much for his own state of mind. As for that which he confidently anticipated from the nation, his own intimation of what it ought to be, at the conclusion of his speech, was enough to call it into life, if it was not already existing. No History of the Thirty Years' Peace would be complete which did not embody the views of the Patriotism of Peace, in analogy with that of War, which were this night offered, amidst the deep silence of a listening parliament, by the First Minister of the Crown:—

Hansard, lxi. 464—466. "I have given you," said Sir R. Peel, "a full, an explicit, an unreserved, but, I hope, an unexaggerated Statement of the financial embarrassments in which we are placed. There are occasions when a Minister of the Crown may, consistently with honour and with good policy, pause before he presses upon the Legislature the adoption of measures which he believes to be abstractedly right. . . . But there are occasions, and this is one of them, upon which a government can make no compromise—there are occasions, and this is one of them, upon which it is the bounden duty of a government to give that counsel to the Legislature which it believes to be right—to undertake the responsibility of proposing those measures which it believes to be for the public advantage, and to devolve upon the Legislature the responsibility of adopting or rejecting those measures. I have performed, on the part of her Majesty's government, my duty. I have proposed, with the full weight and authority of the government, that which I believe to be conducive to the public welfare. I now devolve upon you the duty, which properly belongs to you, of maturely considering, and finally deciding on, the adoption or rejection of the measures I propose. We live in an important era of human affairs. There may be a natural tendency to overrate the magnitude of the crisis in which we live, or those particular events with which we are ourselves conversant; but I think it is impossible to deny that the period in which our lot and the lot of our fathers has been cast—the period which has elapsed since the first outbreak of the first French Revolution—has been one of the most memorable periods that the history of the world will afford. The course which England has pursued during that period will attract for ages to come the contemplation, and, I trust, the admiration, of posterity. That period may be divided into two parts of almost equal duration; a period of twenty-five years of continued conflict—the most momentous which ever engaged the energies of a nation—and twenty-five years, in which most of us have lived, of profound European peace, produced by the sacrifices made during the years of war. There will be a time when those countless millions that are sprung from our loins,

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occupying many parts of the globe, living under institutions derived from ours, speaking the same language in which we convey our thoughts and feelings—for such will be the ultimate results of our wide-spread colonization—the time will come when those countless millions will view with pride and admiration the example of constancy and fortitude which our fathers set during the momentous period of war. They will view with admiration our previous achievements by land and sea, our determination to uphold the public credit, and all those qualities by the exhibition of which we were enabled ultimately, by the example we set to foreign nations, to ensure the deliverance of Europe. In the review of the period, the conduct of our fathers during the years of war will be brought into close contrast with the conduct of those of us who have lived only during the years of peace. I am now addressing you after the duration of peace for twenty-five years. I am now exhibiting to you the financial difficulties and embarrassments in which you are placed; and my confident hope and belief is that, following the example of those who preceded you, you will look those difficulties in the face, and not refuse to make similar sacrifices to those which your fathers made for the purpose of upholding public credit. You will bear in mind that this is no casual and occasional difficulty. You will bear in mind that there are indications among all the upper classes of society of increased comfort and enjoyment—of increased prosperity and wealth, and that, concurrently with these indications, there exists a mighty evil which has been growing up for the last seven years, and which you are now called upon to meet. If you have, as I believe you have, the fortitude and constancy of which you have been set the example, you will not consent with folded arms to view the annual growth of this mighty evil. You will not reconcile it to your consciences to hope for relief from diminished taxation. You will not adopt the miserable expedient of adding, during peace, and in the midst of those indications of wealth and of increasing prosperity, to the burdens which posterity will be called upon to bear. You will not permit this evil to gain such gigantic growth as ultimately to place it far beyond your power to check or control. If you do permit this evil to continue, you must expect the severe but just judgment of a reflecting and retrospective posterity. Your conduct will be contrasted with the conduct of your fathers, under difficulties infinitely less pressing than theirs. Your conduct will be contrasted with that of your fathers, who, with a mutiny at the Nore, a rebellion in Ireland, and disaster abroad, yet submitted with buoyant vigour and universal applause (with the funds as low as 52) to a property tax of 10 per cent. I believe that you will not subject yourselves to an injurious or unworthy contrast. It is my firm belief that you will feel the necessity of preserving inviolate the public credit—that you will not throw away the means of maintaining the public credit by reducing in the most legitimate manner the burden of the public debt. My confident hope and belief is that now, when I devolve the responsibility upon you, you will prove yourselves worthy of your mission—of your mission as the representatives of a mighty people; and that you will not tarnish the fame which it is your duty to cherish as the most glorious inheritance—that you will not impair the character for fortitude, for good faith, which, in proportion as the empire of opinion supersedes and predominates over the empire of physical force, constitutes for every people, but above all for the people of England

—I speak of reputation and character—the main instrument by which a powerful people can repel hostile aggressions, and maintain extended empire."

The Minister continued to do his own part, by a bearing of unflinching firmness and patient courage. On the night of the 11th of March, while the House was waiting for his statement, he had had the painful duty of communicating to it the news of the murder of Sir William M'Naghten, and of the calamities of the Caubool force: and for many nights afterwards, his attendance in the House was a sort of running the gauntlet of inquiries and objections about his scheme, which was too large to be at once comprehended, and too vigorous to be at once estimated by the existing House of Commons.

Financial Scheme.

The scheme was this.—Here was a large deficiency to be met; and such a surplus to be provided as would prevent the recurrence of a deficiency. It was too great a need to be met by a tax on a commodity here and a commodity there, at a time when too many commodities were going out of use through the poverty of the people. The appeal must be made directly to Property: and the first proposition was of an Income tax, not to exceed 7*d.* in the pound, or nearly 3 per cent., for a limited period. Such a tax, besides filling up the deficit, would yield a surplus that would justify a vast reduction of commercial taxation: and the confident expectation of the Minister was, that so much relief would be felt from these reductions—from the improvement in trade and in comfort that must follow—that the payment of the Income tax would be rendered very easy. He believed that when almost the whole mass of commercial duties was removed, the difference to individuals, from the relief, would be worth fully the £2 18*s.* 4*d.* in every £100 of their incomes that the Income tax would take from them. From this tax, all incomes below £150 were to be exempted. This was very well. But it was not so well that income from all sources was to be treated alike;—that the receiver of a temporary annuity of £200 from the funds, for instance, should pay £5 16*s.* 8*d.* out of it, in the very last year, while the receiver of £200 per annum from landed property paid only the same sum:—and, again, that the professional man—the surgeon or lawyer—who, in the decline of life, was beginning to earn £1000 per annum, but who had not made a provision for the family who would lose their income at his death—should pay the same amount of tax as the proprietor who would transmit a rental of £1000 to his children. This was regarded at the time, and has been regarded more and more since, as the great imperfection of the ministerial scheme. It was allowed to pass at first, because the tax was proposed as a temporary one; and it was felt that the vast labour and difficulty of making arrangements for the ascertainment of the sources of income and the apportionment of the tax could hardly be got through before the term of its imposition would have arrived. But arrangements should have been made for the prosecution of this task from the moment it was supposed that a renewal of the tax would be necessary. It has been twice renewed, with the entire approbation of the majority of clear-headed and public-spirited men in the country, many of whom would be glad to see it increased to 10 per cent. for the sake of the abolition of all other taxes: and yet nothing is done or promised, about proportioning the tax to the saleable value of incomes. After deducting the incomes under £150 (which would have yielded a quarter

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of the whole amount) the impost was expected to afford something above three millions and a half. As for its duration, five years would have been proposed unconditionally, but for the chance of one of those turns of commercial prosperity which might render its continuance unnecessary. It was, therefore, to cease at the end of three years, or go on to five, as parliament should at the time see fit. Ireland was exempted from the tax, not only on account of her poverty, but because, not being subject to assessed taxes, she had no machinery for the collection of this duty; and the consequences of setting up such a machinery, in the existing state of Ireland, required the gravest consideration. It was proposed to levy an equivalent amount of tax in Ireland by increased duties on spirits (the consumption of which was again on the increase, from the decline of the Temperance movement) and by equalizing the Stamp duties in England and Ireland. Absentees, residing in England from choice and not public duty, would be subject to the Income tax, as English residents. One other measure for increasing the revenue was proposed,—the extension of the 4s. duty on the export of coal, hitherto partial, to all exportation of that article.—Here would be a revenue, it was supposed, of £4,380,000, from these new sources. After supplying the deficit, what was to be done with the surplus?

New Tariff.

Hansard, lxi. 476.

It was to be applied in the largest reduction of commercial taxation ever contemplated by Cabinet or parliament. Out of 1200 articles subject to Customs duties, 750 were to be reduced. The first principle was, the Minister said, to remove prohibition; and the next, to reduce duties on the raw materials of manufactures to 5 per cent. or less. On articles partially manufactured, the duty would now never exceed 12 per cent.; nor, on articles wholly manufactured, 20 per cent. The loss by these 750 reductions would not, he believed, exceed £270,000;—a small sum for which to have borne so vexatious a taxation for so long! The new Tariff was all ready—divided under twenty heads—laid on the table this Friday night, so as to be read by every tradesman in Great Britain on Monday morning, and talked over in every Monday club. As Sir R. Peel took the document from the hands of Mr. Gladstone, loud cheers arose from every part of the House; and every one probably felt that it was worth waiting through the recess for a hope of rescue like this at the end of it.

Conduct of Opposition.

The late ministers very properly excused themselves from giving an immediate opinion with regard to a scheme so vast as to require much consideration: and Lord J. Russell satisfied himself with making some small objections which occurred to him at the moment. These gentlemen now found that Sir R. Peel had "courage" to propose an Income tax; and those who were familiar with their social and domestic intercourses, knew that they were penetrated with admiration at the statesmanship now before them: and that the generosity of the most captious among them was roused for the time, and the evil spirit of jealousy laid asleep. But it was for only too short a time:—only for three days or so. Then the evil awoke, as rancorous as ever, and stung the ex-ministers into acts of opposition, which showed most meanly on the broad back-ground of the government policy. When Lord J. Russell, aware of the desperate state of our financial management, asked in regard to the Income tax, "What will France say?" it was felt that the meanness of

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Hansard, lxi. 907. opposition could go no further. The reply of the Minister was, "The noble Lord says, 'Do not impose the Income tax, because you will show foreign nations that the resources of this country are exhausted.' I say, never mind what may be the impression on foreign countries. Do that which you believe to be just—that which you think consistent with sound policy—and let foreign nations think what they will." Lord John Russell, however, avowing this to be his strongest ground of objection against the tax, declared his determination to oppose it in every stage of discussion—on the Resolutions, on the Report, the first reading, the second reading, and the third reading.—The Minister was anxious to have the decision of the House before the Easter holidays; and some of the leading members of the Opposition endeavoured to protect him from the abuse of the power of obtaining adjournments: but a small minority baffled them all, and deferred the decisive consideration of the measure till after the 4th of April. Hansard, lxi. 943.

Popular Reception.

The object was, of course, to rouse popular feeling against the Bill. There could hardly be a more promising occasion; for, while every tax is disagreeable, and every heavy tax eminently so, there is something transcendently disgusting in an Income tax, which not only takes a substantial sum immediately out of a man's pocket, but compels him to expose his affairs to a party that he would by no means choose for a confidant. The vexation and grumbling were great at the time, and have been so ever since. In the books at the Bank of England may be seen parenthetical exclamations, such as "Damn Sir Robert Peel and all his crew!" and the like—so numerous that the bookkeepers found it in vain to oppose such a method of pronouncing on the measure. Merchants old enough to remember the war property tax anticipated surcharges, and the return of all the injured and angry feelings under which they used to suffer without redress. The young professional man quaked at the necessity he saw before him of either owning himself to be earning less than £150 a year, or paying a tax out of his bare means of bread to keep up his professional credit. There was no lack of discontent and apprehension; and this the Minister surely anticipated: but he anticipated no less confidently, and no less correctly, that the discontent and apprehension would be less powerful than the desire for financial release and security. Men would rather submit to the most disagreeable of taxes than go on as the nation had been doing for the last six years. They responded to the call of the government to rouse themselves to a great effort, to recover a position of safety and honour: and all attempts to excite them to opposition during the Easter recess completely failed.—After the House met, there was a debate of four nights on an amendment, condemnatory of the tax, of Lord J. Russell's; but it merely exhibited the fact that the choice lay between an Income tax (including a Property tax) and loans;—the last being more eminently than a property tax a resource proper to war-time, being indeed a disgrace in time of peace. The popular confidence in the new Ministry had raised the funds; and some Whig leaders showed what an advantageous time this would be for a loan; and it was this which occasioned the energetic passage of the debate which, greeted with cheers and counter cheers and laughter in the House, met with the same reception every where, and became at once celebrated. "I call upon you," said Sir R. Peel, in reply to Lord J. Russell's suggestion of a Hansard, lxii. 170.

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new loan, "I call upon you to make great exertion; and the first step you take towards recovery—the first demonstration of your willingness—will be half the victory. If you are afraid to submit to sacrifices—if you paint in glowing colours the miserable condition of those who are to pay taxes—if you say it is better to go on on the present system, increasing the debt a little more, funding at 91—why are the 3 per cents. at 91? Who has made them 91? Public credit is high—the funds have risen—and say you, 'You can have a loan easily now!' O! you miserable financiers! (Laughter and cheers.) I beg pardon if, in the heat of debate, I have used a word that may give offence. But the funds are high because you have shown a disposition not to resort to a system of loans in time of peace." Lord J. Russell's amendment was rejected by a vote of 308 to 202, on the 13th of April: and another amendment, proposing the reading of the Bill on that day six months, was thrown out on the 18th by a vote of 285 to 188.—The progress of the Bill through Committee was rapid. After the rejection of a few amendments, little further opposition was made. Eighty clauses were disposed of on the night of the 2nd of May; and on the 30th of May, the third reading was carried by a majority of 130, and the Bill passed the Commons.—In the Lords, there was no debate till the third reading; and what there was did not prevent the Bill from passing the same evening, by a majority of 71. Hansard, lxii. 444. Hansard, lxii. 710.

The speech which appears to have most truly represented the predominant opinion and sentiment in regard to the Income tax, was that of Mr. Raikes Currie, a member who had been in parliament since 1837, but had hardly opened his lips till now, when he did it to more purpose than any body else. He avowed that he came into parliament in the hope of aiding in a large and secure extension and protection of the suffrage: but that that hope had been baulked by Lord John Russell's declaration that he considered the Reform bill a final measure, and that it was by a determinate purpose that the preponderance of the landed interest in parliament was provided for. Under this preponderance of monopolists, all efforts of the liberal party against monopolies must be hopeless; and especially while, as at present, there was no appearance of popular support of the Whigs. When Lord John Russell had "slammed the door of the constitution in the face of the unrepresented," he was surely bound to offer no factious opposition to measures in which liberal principles were embodied. The only hope left was in the carrying of liberal measures by those who had power to carry them. He considered himself at full liberty to consider separately, and in entire independence of party, the measures brought forward which contained any popular promise: and he certainly considered the proposal of the Income tax as full of such promise. He was aware of all the evils of that tax—from those on the surface to those in its depths: but it had the great virtue which could cover even that amount of evils—that it spared the poor, and laid the burden of taxation where it could best be borne. He saw the beginning of a new era in this appeal to the moneyed classes of the nation to restore the national resources: and, approving the measure, he felt himself bound over to candour towards its originator. He saw no use in driving the Minister (if that were possible) into the arms of ultra-protectionists by persecution. He remembered that Minister's declaration that he considered the prosperity of the manufacturing classes of more Hansard, lxii. 682—688.

1842. consequence to the landed interest than any protective laws: and he considered this a sufficient ground for giving him fair play—even if he had not been now the only hope of popular progress. This statement, remarkable and much remarked on at the time, is even more valuable now. It then served as an exposition of a widely spread view, and as a guide to some who were still perplexed what to think and do: but now its political truth is so verified that the speech reads rather as a commentary on Sir R. Peel's course, and the state of parties during his term of office, than as a piece of reflection at the outset. The operation of the Income tax commenced from the 5th of April, 1842.

New Tariff in the Commons.

It has been mentioned that a copy of the proposed Tariff had been laid before parliament, and printed off for the benefit of the country. This first copy could not be the working one. As the Minister explained, it was necessary, in preparing the measure, to avoid communication with persons actually interested in the supposed protection of particular articles; but it was next necessary to allow such persons time and opportunity to state their views on their own behalf. The changes made in consequence of such representations were not such as to occasion much delay; and by the 5th of May, the amended copy of the proposed tariff was on the table of the House. It may be questioned whether any measure connected with finance, brought forward in parliament at any former time, ever caused such deep and glowing satisfaction throughout the educated classes of this country as this new tariff. When it was considered that the Minister's business was—not that of the amateur financier—to make out a perfect scheme, but to propose a reform that would work, it was felt that this was the soundest and most remarkable Budget ever brought forward—the soundest in its principle, and the most remarkable in its courage and comprehensiveness.

As the Income tax was intended to tax wealth, the new tariff was mainly designed to relieve manufacturing industry. The prospects now opened were very cheering. Owing to the high duties on foreign woods, we had not hitherto been able to keep those woods, and make them into furniture at home, but had been obliged to let them go to France and Germany, to employ the cabinet-makers there, and then to import the furniture. Now, the cabinet trade was to be so relieved, that there was hope that we might export furniture.—The free command of dye-woods, again, was highly important to our manufactures. As for ores, copper had hitherto been smelted in bond, and actually sent away on account of the duties, while we had to import from France and Belgium copper smelted with our own coal.—Oils and extracts, indispensable in many manufactures, were made freely accessible by reduction of duty. And above all these benefits was that of the change in the timber duties. Colonial timber was to be admitted duty-free; and this would enable parliament to diminish the duties on Baltic timber, to the lowest point consistent with good faith towards Canada. The greatest authority on free-trade subjects, Mr. Deacon Hume, had said, that if we had untaxed timber as we had untaxed coal and untaxed iron, we should be provided with the three great primary raw materials of employment and consumption. This we were henceforth to have. We should have better ship-building, and more of it. Our fisheries would extend, from the superior character of fishing-boats. The quality of our dwelling-houses, bridges, and utensils of various kinds, could not but be greatly improved.

Among the most interesting of the proposed changes, were those relating to food. The agriculturists would benefit by the introduction of clover and other seeds, which had hitherto paid a high duty. The farmers liked this very well; but they were dreadfully alarmed at what was to be done about cattle, salt meat, and fish. There was no reason to apprehend that the British nation could be fed in independence of the British farmer and grazier: but it really seemed as if some people thought such a thing might happen. It was well that there were wide differences of opinion on each head. While some feared for our graziers from the introduction of cattle from the Continent, others thought that the graziers would profit largely by the fattening of the lean beasts which would be imported; for there never was a doubt (unhappily) that the consumption of meat in England ought to be very much larger indeed than it had been any time within this century. The consumption of meat was nowhere on the increase in any proportion to the increase of numbers; and in too many localities it was known that meat-eating was becoming confined to a higher and a higher class in society. The Minister, for one, therefore, had no apprehension of the ruin of the graziers from the alteration; and he proposed to admit cattle, fresh and salted meat, hams, lard, salmon, and herrings, at duties considerably reduced. The immediate panic, among the ignorant agricultural class, was great; and there were, as usual, adventurers ready to make their market of it. Butchers' meat from Hamburgh was advertised at 3*d.* per lb., while the people of Hamburgh were themselves paying 6*d.* Numbers of graziers and farmers sold off their cattle for whatever they could get, and said that Sir R. Peel's tariff was ruining them. Every horned head seen on deck on the arrival of vessels at Hull or Harwich counted for a dozen to alarmed imaginations; and the pigs reported were innumerable. But these were mistakes sure of speedy correction; and in a few months, some people laughed, and others sighed, on finding how far the supply of animal food fell short of the national want.

The Minister found some difficulty in carrying out the true principle of reducing duties to the point which should obviate smuggling. On this principle the duty on straw plat had been reduced from 17*s.* per lb. to 5*s.*: but the stir made was so great, and apparently so charitable towards the poor women and children in country districts, whose employment was supposed to be at stake, that the point was yielded so far as to raise the 5*s.* to 7*s.* 6*d.* But the Minister pointed out the mistake in parliament, producing, to the great amusement of the House, and no doubt of the smuggling portion of society, an ordinary looking bundle of straw for platting, in the centre of which was concealed a small roll of straw plat, such as it would still be worth while to smuggle, if the duty was higher than 5*s.* per lb.—Some opposition was made to the new duties on swine, and fish, and apples, and butter, and other articles; but large majorities in every case affirmed the government duties. The Whitsuntide holidays had allowed time for consultation and reflection: the panic about the importation of cattle had ceased already, and mutton was again 7*d.*, and even 8*d.* per lb.; so that all was fair for carrying the new tariff. The objections of opposition related to the omission of sugar from the tariff reductions, and the

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Hansard, lxiv. 737.

treatment of corn, and the difference between the duties on colonial and on foreign productions. The replies were, that the reduction of the corn duties was considerable enough for the present; that the case of sugar was an exceptional one; and that government had done all it could in freeing colonial produce, thus preparing for negotiation about foreign produce, and setting an example of fearless freedom of trade to other countries.—On the whole, there was a more general assent than usual to the measure, and less party recrimination. The ex-Ministers told of what they had intended to do in the same direction, if they had not been stopped by their failure in the treatment of the two first articles—corn and sugar. Here was the thing done—every one feeling that the corn question was as truly a merely deferred one as the sugar. Both these remained to be dealt with hereafter; and meantime, here was a provision for the extension of manufactures and commerce, the increase of food, and such a reduction in the general cost of living as would go far to enable the people to pay their new Income tax, and perhaps compensate for it. Men might differ, and did differ, as to whether this new tariff was valuable only as a move in the right direction, or whether it would also achieve what its authors hoped, in the extension of trade, and the improvement of comfort: but none—unless it were a few bigots in and out of parliament—doubted the Customs Acts reform to be a good thing. One gentleman would have free trade in every thing but herrings; another in every thing but straw plat; and Sir R. Peel and Lord J. Russell in every thing but corn: but these separate opinions merged in general satisfaction that, out of 1200 articles that paid Customs duties, 750 were to be reduced;—and a large majority of these to a merely nominal amount.—The Bill passed the Commons, amidst loud cheering, on the 28th of June.

Hansard, lxiv. 742.

In the Lords.

In the other House, Lord Stanhope prophesied that the measure would be fatal to the power and reputation of the minister who brought it forward, and that we should end by having our navy and many other classes fed by foreigners instead of by British farmers. Lord Colchester thought he might vote for this Bill without advocating the general principles of free trade, and merely as an improvement in Customs management. Lord Stanhope laboured hard with amendments in committee, and against the third reading; but in vain; and Lord Radnor was as energetic in opposition for the reason that the Bill did not go far enough. But those two were joined by only seven more on the last decisive occasion, when the Bill passed by a vote of 52 to 9 on the 8th of July.

Passage of the Bill. Hansard, lxiv. 1168.

Sugar Duties.

The article of sugar was not passed over this session because it did not stand in the tariff. It had a debate to itself. The subject was becoming a difficult one; and men were growing positive and peremptory as usual, in proportion to the difficulty. No difficulties, in all our mortal experience, are so formidable as those which—the result of wrong-doing—attend the transition from wrong to right-doing; and the perplexities about slave-produce were now showing themselves to be in proportion to the moral mistake and offence of slavery. Amidst the never-ending complexities of the subject, and entanglements of the yearly debates, we may single out the two most important aspects of the question, and show how they appeared at this time.

The domestic view.

On the one hand, the West India planters urged that their lives had grown up, and their property been employed, under the legal institution of negro slavery, and a system of protective duties on sugar—now, slavery was abolished in their islands, but not in other sugar-producing countries: and they claimed the continuance of high sugar duties, both as a carrying out of the system under which they had invested their fortunes in the West Indies, and as a necessary condition of their competing with countries where slave-labour was at command. On the other hand, the friends of the poor in England showed how sugar had become truly a necessary of life, when it was needful for the infants' food in the cottage, and for the temperate man's meal of tea or coffee —which were largely superseding intoxicating drinks—and for the use of many articles of food which could not be eaten without it. They showed the hardship and (as they considered) the iniquity of making the British labourer, who had already paid so much to the planters as compensation for the loss of slave property, now go without sugar, or pay double for it, to bolster up the fortunes which had been invested under a bad system; a system whose badness ensured its overthrow. Somebody must suffer—as is always the case where a social sin has been committed: and that somebody ought to be anybody rather than the British labourer. Then, reasons were alleged why it ought to be, and must be, the planter-class that should suffer—that a system requiring high duties cannot, in our age of the world, exist for any length of time: that the withdrawal of protection would compel the planters to better methods of cultivation—to more agricultural skill and improved management: and that, if estates could not be made to answer under such improved methods, they were not worth sustaining at all.—This was one aspect of the controversy.

The Anti-Slavery View.

The other related to the condition of the institution of slavery in the world —to our relation to it—and to the effect upon it of our rate of sugar duty. The controversy here was as to whether we had so pledged ourselves to the cause of human liberty as to make it supersede the interests of our planters in the West Indies, and our labourers at home; whether, in short, it was a case in which we were unreservedly to sacrifice the interests of individuals to the maintenance of a great principle of social morals all over the world. In connexion with this was the question whether, as a matter of fact, slavery was restrained by our high sugar-duties and other arrangements, and whether it would be aggravated by admitting free-trade principles into this department of international traffic. On the one hand, it was proved that the slave trade was constantly on the increase, in spite of all arrangements, if not in consequence of them; and it was argued that the strongest political ground for the abolition of slavery was the superior value of free over slave labour: while, on the other hand, it was protested that the peculiarity of the case took it out of the category of free trade; and that if slave-grown sugar were admitted to our markets under any duties which would leave it within reach of popular consumption, a great stimulus would be given to slave cultivation, and a new lease of life given to the criminal institution.

From year to year were these opposing views brought forward, and supported by their respective arguments. On the present occasion, the explanations of the government were looked forward to with impatience, from the increased eagerness of the friends of the people that they should have cheap

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sugar while enjoying so many other relaxations, and because the late ministers insisted on a reduction of the sugar duties, as next in importance to their eight-shilling corn duty. On the 3rd of June, the Chancellor of the Exchequer declared the inability of the government to reduce the sugar duties that year, well-pleased as they would be to do it. To reduce the colonial sugar, and not the foreign, would be to forfeit some revenue without effectually diminishing the cost to the consumer; and there were two objections to reducing the foreign sugar duty; the loss to the revenue, which would be greater than could be adventured in the same year with the tariff reduction; and the delay of foreign powers in affording a sufficient guarantee against slavery and the slave trade. An anti-slavery sentiment was springing up in slave-holding communities, and it might be eminently mischievous to the anti-slavery cause to throw open our markets at that juncture to slave-grown sugar. The government therefore could offer no change this year, and the reductions proposed by opposition members were rejected by large majorities.—In the session of 1843, the same process was gone through; the ministers proposed no change, and gave the same reasons; and they were met by the same arguments and some fruitless amendments from the opposition.

Hansard, lxiii. 1155.

Hansard, lxiii. 1175, 1233.

Poor Law Renewal Act.

There was not time, towards the close of the busy and profitable session, for a full discussion of the Poor-law Bill—so deeply as the question of pauper relief was affected by the urgent distress of the times. Many members had much to say against the existing law, and new arrangements to propose: and it was absolutely necessary to do something; for the Commission had been renewed, by a vote in the preceding session, for one year; and there must be a provision made against the expiration of the term. With some trouble and difficulty, the Home Secretary obtained a renewal of the term of the Commission for five years, and a settling of some indispensable practical points. A strong effort was made by Mr. Escott to procure permission for magistrates to administer out-door relief at their discretion; but under no pressure of haste, or alarm at the prevailing distress, could the House be so mad as to vote away the essential principle of the great Poor-law reform, though there seemed, at one moment, some fear that it might. Mr. Escott's motion in favour of out-door relief at the discretion of the magistrates, was rejected by a majority of 90 to 55; and the Commission was renewed for five years, under a promise from Sir James Graham that he would introduce a new Bill early in the next session, in which some needful reforms should be proposed.

Hansard, lxv. 356.

Hansard, lxv. 377.

Law of Literary Property.

This year, 1842, settled the law of Literary Property, as it at present stands, and as it will stand for a long time to come.—Before the days of Queen Anne, it was concluded, as a matter of course, that any book or other literary production, was the property of its author; and the old registers of the Stationers' Company show that some thousands of books, even as early as the times of Elizabeth, passed from owner to owner, by descent or sale, like any other property. Acts of Parliament, and Star-chamber decrees also afford evidence that political and legal authorities considered literary works to be the exclusive property of their authors.—At no time does any one appear to have doubted the author's exclusive right over his production while it remained in MS. The doubt, when it arose, related to his ownership when, by act of publication, he had made his ideas general property. The doubt seems to

Political Dictionary, i. p. 639.

exhibit a mere confusion between the ideas and the vehicle in which they are communicated;—between plagiarism and piracy. The people of the United States appear to be still unable to make the distinction. Because they can derive and reproduce ideas from an English book, they cannot see why they should not lay hands on the work itself, reprint it, pocket the proceeds of the sale without consideration of the author, and, as long as our own laws allowed the practice, send their cheap copies to Europe, and sell them under the author's own eye. Yet more;—they cannot see why they should not take a work by an English author whose name will secure a sale, cut out some portions of the book, alter the title, make it such as the author would not acknowledge, put his name to it, profit by that name, and send him no share of the proceeds. They cannot see why they should not put the author's name to a work which he has chosen to publish anonymously. Barbarous and base as this ignorance and cupidity appear, unable as such agents show themselves to be to conceive of a book as a work of art which must no more be tampered with than a statue or a picture, it but little exceeds our own barbarism on this subject a century and a half ago, or even that which might be found among the unreflecting and unintellectual up to the period of the passage of the Copyright Act of 1842.

Act of 1710.

If books were, before the 18th century, considered as of course the property of their authors, the supposition is now held to have been put an end to by the passage of a law which secured to authors and their heirs the property in their works for a term of years—which was in fact taking the property from them after the expiration of that term of years. The Act was passed in 1710; and the term fixed was twenty-one years from the day of publication for works already in print: and fourteen years for all works to be henceforward published;—the latter term being once renewable, if the author should be still living at the end of the first fourteen years. More than half a century afterwards, however, Lord Mansfield and other authorities settled, as they thought, that the perpetual right of the author over his work was not put an end to by the statute of 1710; but again, five years afterwards, Lord Mansfield and those who agreed with him (the Judges being in fact equally divided) were overruled; and it was decided, from 1774 onwards, that perpetual copyright was put an end to by the intervention of statutes.—In 1814, the term was extended in favour of authors, it being now fixed at twenty-eight years for the author and his assigns, and furthermore for the term of the author's life, if he should survive the twenty-eight years' term.

Political Dictionary, i. 641.

Act of 1814.

Movement in 1839.

The mischiefs of these restrictions were found to be such as had not been dreamed of by law-makers who believed they were granting a boon to authors: and by this time, some of these evils were becoming evident to the most careless and uninterested. The family of Sir Walter Scott, stripped by his great losses, might be supposed to have an honourable provision in his splendid array of works, which the world was still buying, as eagerly as ever: but the term of copyright of "Waverley" was about to expire; and there was no one who could not see the injustice of transferring to the public a property so evidently sacred to heirs.—Again, the poet Wordsworth was now an aged man. His was a reputation which it had taken half a century to bring out clear from the prejudices and false tastes of society in his early day. If he

1842. were to die now, his family would be deprived of all benefit from the sale of his works.—Again, Southey came forward to declare that he had been prevented by the existing copyright law from undertaking works of weight, research, and permanent value, from inability to undertake labours whose fruits would be taken from him and his heirs just when the world was beginning to find the value of his books and to buy them. It was clear that the operation of the law was to discourage the preparation of solid works, requiring research and the expenses which belong to it, and yielding pecuniary recompense only slowly and tardily, while it encouraged a flashy light literature, such as might command an immediate, though temporary sale. Probably the attention of the careless was fixed on this question of literary property by the petitions sent up to parliament by various authors about this time; and by none more than by the Petition of Thomas Carlyle, which bears date in the spring of 1839. This petition is a remarkable document, which may well find its place here from its including considerations of greater depth, and more importance to social philosophy and morals, than some matters to which a greater space has necessarily been given.

Petitions.

London Examiner, April 7, 1839.

"To the Honourable the Commons of England in Parliament assembled, the petition of Thomas Carlyle, a writer of books,

"Humbly showeth,

"That your petitioner has written certain books, being incited thereto by various innocent or laudable considerations, chiefly by the thought that said books might in the end be found to be worth something. That your petitioner had not the happiness to receive from Mr. Thomas Tegg, or any publisher, re-publisher, printer, bookseller, bookbuyer, or other the like man or body of men, any encouragement or countenance in writing of said books, or to discern any chance of receiving such: but wrote them by effort of his own and the favour of Heaven. That all useful labour is worthy of recompense: that all honest labour is worthy of the chance of recompense: that the giving and assuring to each man what recompense his labour has actually merited may be said to be the business of all Legislation, Polity, Government, and Social Arrangement whatever among men—a business indispensable to attempt, impossible to accomplish accurately, difficult to accomplish without inaccuracies, that become enormous, unsupportable, and the parent of social confusions which never altogether end. That your petitioner does not undertake to say what recompense in money this labour of his may deserve: whether it deserve any recompense in money, or whether money in any quantity could hire him to do the like. That this his labour has found hitherto, in money or money's worth, small recompense or none: that he is by no means sure of its ever finding recompense: but thinks that, if so, it will be at a distant time, when he, the labourer, will probably no longer be in need of money, and those dear to him will still be in need of it. That the law does at least protect all persons in selling the production of their labour at what they can get for it, in all market-places to all lengths of time. Much more than this the law does to many, but so much it does to all, and less than this to none. That your petitioner cannot discover himself to have done unlawfully in this his said labour of writing books, or to have become criminal, or have forfeited the law's protection thereby. Contrariwise your petitioner believes firmly that he is innocent in said labour; that if he be found in the long run to have written a genuine enduring book, his merit therein, and desert towards England and English and other men, will be considerable, and not easily estimable in money; that, on the other hand, if his book prove false and ephemeral, he and it will be abolished and forgotten, and no harm done. That, in this manner, your petitioner plays no unfair game against the world; his stake being life itself, so to speak (for the penalty is death by starvation), and the world's stake nothing till once it see the dice thrown; so that in any case the world cannot lose. That in the happy and long-doubtful event of the game's going in his favour, your petitioner submits that the small winnings thereof do belong to him or his, and that no other mortal has justly either part or lot in them at all, now, henceforth, or for ever. May it therefore please your Honourable House to protect him in said happy and long-doubtful event; and (by passing your Copyright Bill) forbid all Thomas Teggs, and other extraneous persons, entirely unconcerned in this adventure of his, to steal from him his small winnings, for a space of sixty years at the shortest. After sixty years, unless your Honourable House provide otherwise, they may begin to steal.

"And your petitioner will ever pray.

"THOMAS CARLYLE."

PROPOSED BILLS.

The sixty years here mentioned were the term proposed by the mover for a new Copyright Act—Mr. Serjeant Talfourd—in three successive sessions. In 1841, his Bill was thrown out, mainly through the influence of a speech of Mr. Macaulay's, which afforded an humbling proof of the carelessness of the House on subjects which had not been long rendered familiar by discussion. As for the riddle how an able literary man could utter such a speech, and venture to offer it to the House, the answer given at the time was that there must be reasons behind—some cause which could not be alleged—for such a man exposing himself in a speech unsound in its whole argument, and for the House acting upon it. The reason most commonly supposed was that the Bill before the House was badly drawn, and could not have been worked:—if so, it might have been better to have pointed this out. But it does not matter much what the real reason was; for Mr. Macaulay himself wrought on the other side in the next session, when Serjeant Talfourd was no longer in the House. Lord Mahon brought forward the subject, proposing an extension of twenty-five years in the term of literary proprietorship. Mr. Macaulay proposed a term of forty-two years, on which the House decided. Moreover, the House accepted another amendment brought forward by Lord Mahon and opposed by Mr. Macaulay, which gave to the heirs a further term of seven years from the death of the author. Under the somewhat sudden zeal for the rights of authors, therefore, shown by parliament in 1842, the law awarded to authors the sole property of their works for life, and to their heirs for seven years more. If those seven years should expire before the end of forty-two years from the time of publication, then the right was to run through the forty-two years. This was something gained in the direction of justice: and few now doubt that it will be found possible so to make arrangements for the preparation of Cyclopædias and other compilations as in time to allow to authors and their heirs their literary property in perpetuity; as every argument for such a product being property at all is adverse to its ceasing to be so at any particular date. If the institution of property is to stand, it is hardly possible that this kind—of so special and high an order—should remain precarious and transitory, in comparison with all else.

LORD MAHON'S BILL.
Hansard, lx. 1429.
Hansard, lxi. 1397.

COPYRIGHT LAW OF 1842.
Political Dictionary, i. 641.

ELECTION COMPROMISES.

As the elections of 1841 had been a last struggle for and against the maintenance of the Whig government, it was natural that bribery—always too common at a general election—should abound; and it was believed that on this occasion the profligacy had exceeded all ordinary limits. Several cases had been brought before election Committees in the Commons for investigation; and the termination of some of these inquiries was so strange as to attract suspicion, and cause uneasiness, both in and out of the House. The return of the Members for Reading was objected to, on the ground of bribery; evidence was produced before the Committee, which went to substantiate the

1842.

charges; and in the midst of the business, the Committee was suddenly informed that the petition was withdrawn. There was nothing to be done but for the Committee to declare the sitting members duly elected: but every one suspected that this was not the end of the matter. Presently it was announced that one of the members for Reading was about to accept the Chiltern Hundreds. A similar proceeding followed in a second case, and a third, and a fourth: and, where the seat was not immediately vacated, or declared to be held only till next month, it was rumoured and believed that the resignation would take place at the end of the session. This was a degree of corruption not to be endured: and on the 5th of May, Mr. Roebuck gave notice that, on the next evening, he should put a question to the member for Reading, and other members whom he named.

Mr. Roebuck.

On the 6th, a singular scene took place in the House—a scene very instructive to those who witnessed it, and to those who afterwards read of it. Mr. Roebuck was universally regarded as an upright man and independent member, who had the fullest right that uprightness and independence could give to watch over the purity of the representation, and rebuke every act of corruption. But he was also felt to be fully conscious of his position, and not at all too modest in the exhibition of it. He was considered rather too apt to assume the office of censor on occasions which were hardly worth the unpopularity he attracted to himself by it; and, by long tenure of this office, his speaking had verged more and more towards lecturing—towards admonition—in an assemblage where such a tone is least admissible. After he had announced that he had a question to ask of the member for Reading and other members, there was much eagerness for the sport. Every one knew that Mr. Roebuck would be in the right, and his victims most miserably embarrassed by the wrong of their position; and the scene was likely to be a curious one, between the haughty purism of the censor on the one hand, and the impotent anger of the compromised members on the other. The scene was a curious one, but not through any frailties of Mr. Roebuck's. According to all accounts, he was quiet and courteous in manner, said nothing more than the occasion justified, and made only such inquiry as it was incumbent on any member to make who had at heart the honour of parliament and the integrity of the representation.

Hansard, lxiii.209.

Mr. Roebuck, addressing himself to Lord Chelsea, one of the members for Reading, said he had heard and believed that the inquiry before the Committee had been put an end to by a compromise, in which one, if not both, of the members for Reading was concerned; a bond having been entered into with their knowledge, if not in their names, to the effect that one or both of them should vacate his seat by accepting the Chiltern Hundreds. Such a transaction was a breach of the privileges of the House; and he was therefore entitled to ask, which he did with the most perfect respect for Lord Chelsea, whether he was cognizant of any such arrangement. The same question was afterwards put, with the same deliberation and courtesy, to the members for Nottingham, Lewes, Penryn, and Harwich.—Most of the members appealed to made the weakest possible reply. They assumed an air of indignation, and refused to answer impertinent questions about their private affairs and personal arrangements. As the question was based on the strong ground of the privilege of parliament, this futile reply was equivalent to an admission of inability to make a better; and it was thus received—Mr. Roebuck thanking each gentleman significantly for his answer, and the House listening in mingled anxiety and amusement. One member, Mr. Elphinstone, avowed that an objectionable compromise had been agreed upon; that he was no party to it; and that he was not going to vacate his seat—a welcome piece of frankness and manliness in the midst of the strange scene. Captain Plumridge, who sat for Penryn, was no less intrepid. He said he knew nothing of the compromise till it was made; and he disapproved of the arrangement when he was told of it, and did so still. But he afterwards drew upon himself a rebuke from Mr. Roebuck by declaring, in terms which made the lax assemblage laugh uproariously, that he retired because he had "made a bad bargain." In the midst of the questioning scene, the Chancellor of the Exchequer endeavoured to break in, and call the attention of the House to a discussion on the Income tax: but the inclination of the House was to see this business to an end; and it did so. After all the impugned members had answered, or declined to answer, the discussion was adjourned to the next Monday. It then appeared how awakening was the impression made on the House, and how useless were all attempts to stifle Mr. Roebuck's inquiry. A Committee of investigation was appointed; and it was clear that, though the work of that Committee might be impeded, and the express aims of its author thwarted by technical devices, the honour of the House was really appealed to, and some check was put upon corruption. One striking incident was the refusal of the appointment of Steward of the Chiltern Hundreds by the Chancellor of the Exchequer.—There was, once upon a time, such an office in reality—the business of the Steward being to watch over the safety of that district of Buckinghamshire called the Chiltern Hundreds, when its woods were infested with banditti, who were a perpetual trouble to the rural inhabitants. The office had long been merely nominal; but it served, under the description of "a place of honour and profit under the Crown," as a means of vacating a seat in parliament, which cannot be resigned under any other plea than having accepted such an office. The office is resigned as soon as the parliamentary seat is vacated, that it may be ready for the next applicant. On the present occasion, the application of one of the members for Reading was met by the following reply from the Chancellor of the Exchequer: "Under ordinary circumstances, I should not feel justified in availing myself of the discretion vested in me in order to refuse or delay the appointment for which you have applied, when sought for with a view to the resignation of a seat in parliament. But after the disclosures which have taken place with respect to certain boroughs, of which Reading is one, and after the admission of the facts by the parties interested, I consider that by lending my assistance to the fulfilment of any engagement which may have been entered into as arising out of any such compromise, I should, in some sort, make myself a party to transactions which I do not approve, and of which the House of Commons has implied its condemnation. I feel, moreover, that by a refusal on my part of the means by which alone such engagements can be fulfilled, I afford the most effectual discouragement to the entering into similar compromises in future, and thus promote, so far as is in my power, the intentions of the House of Commons."

1842.

Hansard, lxiii. 214.

Hansard, lxiii. 212.

Hansard, lxiii. 224.

STEWARDSHIP OF THE CHILTERN HUNDREDS.

Political Dictionary, i. p. 500.

1842.

Proceedings in the House.

Mr. Roebuck moved for and obtained a Committee of Investigation into the cases before the House. He moved for and obtained a Bill of Indemnity to Witnesses; and the inquiry was conducted with closed doors. The Committee reported, towards the end of July; and it was this Report which decided Mr. Goulburn to refuse the Chiltern Hundreds to Lord Chelsea. On the refusal being canvassed in the House, the Premier avowed that Mr. Goulburn had acted with the concurrence of the whole Cabinet. Mr. Roebuck's resolutions, founded on the Report of the Committee, against issuing writs for the compromised boroughs till parliament had provided some security against election bribery, were negatived; but every one felt that the Report, with its disclosures and dispassionate comments, could not be inoperative.—Lord John Russell introduced a Bill whose chief objects were to facilitate the disclosure of bribery committed, rather than to visit it with new penalties; and to prevent such compromises as had lately disgraced the House. The Bill passed both Houses before the conclusion of the session, and became law on the 10th of August.

Hansard, lxv. 1109.

Hansard, lxv. 833.

Hansard, lxv. 1214.

Character of the Session.

There was something really refreshing to the country, in the midst of its distresses, in the character and action of this session of parliament. At the beginning, the Opposition was hostile, saucy, active, and united: and it was curious to see how it changed under the eye of a minister who could frame measures first, and then carry them. Some of his measures were as unacceptable to classes and parties as any that had been brought forward for some years; yet their progress, from their first conception to their becoming the law of the land, was never delayed. The nation saw and felt that its business was understood and accomplished, and the House of Commons was no longer like a sleeper under nightmare. The long session was a busy one. The Queen wore a cheerful air when she thanked her parliament for their effectual labours. The Opposition was no longer such as could impede the operations of the next session. The condition of the country was fearful enough; but something was done for its future improvement, and the way was now shown to be open for further beneficent legislation. The solitary circumstance of congratulation, in regard to the condition of the people, was that there was once more a good harvest.

CHAPTER VII.

1843.

Central subject of Debate.

WHEN parliament reassembled on the 2d of February, there was no increased hopefulness in any quarter. The distress had deepened; the revenue returns indicated a lessened consumption of articles of popular comfort: and the agricultural interests were almost as depressed and alarmed as the manufacturing and commercial classes. Some said the tariff had done no good—forgetting that, as much of it did not come into use till October, it was too soon yet to form a judgment. Some said the tariff caused the distress; and this was so far true that the ignorant among the agricultural body did fall into a panic about the importation of food, and incur great losses by selling off stock, and spreading their own fears over their own class. Some apprehended another change in the Corn law; and all felt that they were not settling down with any confidence under the new Sliding Scale, while the League was so growing in numbers and dignity as to appear very like a new power in the State. Under these circumstances, the character of the session of 1843 could be easily anticipated. It was chiefly occupied with the condition of the industrial classes.

And here must arise the old difficulty—the difficulty which is yet unsolved, and which must remain unsolved while our representative system continues imperfect—the difficulty of determining the true province of legislation in regard to the interests of the industrial classes. This was in fact, though not in words, the one great controversy of the session of 1843, as it may yet be of future sessions. There were not many men in the House, though there were too many men in the country, who were heard to say that it is the business of the government to find employment and food for the people: but there were men of opposite extremes in politics, who contended that it was the duty of government to regulate the interests of the poor, and determine the circumstances of their lives by law. Some high Conservatives contended for this on the ground of the supposed parental character of government which should watch over the members of the State as the Church watches over the members of its own communion. As the high-churchmen claimed dominion, under a metaphor, for Mother Church, while the church was in fact impersonal, consisting of an aggregate of believers, so our high-statesmen claimed dominion, under a metaphor, for the State as a parent, while the State is, in fact, impersonal, consisting of an aggregate of persons, agreeing, or destined by circumstances, to live under a particular form of government, laws, and customs. With these high Conservatives were joined those members of the Commons who verged most towards democracy—who claimed a special protection for the poor from government because the poor were unrepresented in the legislature. A future Peer and the Chartist chairman who had conducted torch-light meetings on a Lancashire moor, were seen advocating together a legal

1843. regulation of the poor man's labour; while men of intermediate parties advocated the poor man's cause in a directly opposite manner; by contending that his labour is his only property; and that to interfere with it—to restrict its sale by law—is to infringe fatally on the poor man's rights.—The truth was (and it is the truth still) there is much to be said on both sides; for the relation between the State and the working classes in our country is not settled in theory, any more than in practice. It is not only true that the working classes are unrepresented in the legislature; but the circulation of labour and the supply of food (now at last free) were so restricted by law as to depress the poor below the level of comfort, and the means of education. The church failed in her duty of educating the people; and the State placed them at disadvantage by restrictive laws. In consequence, a population has grown up, special in its ignorance, its sufferings, and its needs, which must be specially dealt with, if at all. It is impossible to admit that, under a representative system, it is the proper business of the government to regulate the private interests of any class whatever. It is impossible, under the far higher constitution of humanity, to refuse attention to the case of the depressed, ignorant, and suffering, of our people. The only course seems to be to admit that, as we have not been true to our representative system (being at this day far from having carried it out), we cannot be harshly true to its theory. Having permitted a special misery and need to grow up, we must meet it with a special solace and aid. As to how the solace and aid are to be given—this is the point of difficulty. In the absence of all theory which can command agreement, men must bring themselves into agreement as well as they can under the one guiding principle that nothing must be done to impair any one's rights as a citizen under a representative system. Every man who is now practically excluded from the benefits of the representative system is to be regarded as destined to inclusion under them; and nothing that is done for his mind or his fortunes by the grace of the state is to lower him from his position of theoretical citizenship under a constitution which presumes every man's condition and interests to be in his own hands.—Whatever names and aspects the debates and legislation of 1843 might assume, they were almost all, in fact, a study of the serious problem of the relation of the State to the poor.

Lord Howick's Motion. Hansard, lxvi. 448.

Lord Howick began, on the 13th of February, with a motion for the appointment of a Committee of the whole House to consider the distress of the country. He believed, with Dr. Arnold, that the mass of men rarely feel political uneasiness and discontent except under pressure of personal want. He believed that this pressure had now become so terrible and so extensive as to peril our institutions; and he called upon the House to consider and decide whether it was not time for government to interfere. The mode of interference which he desired was the repeal of all restrictions on importation; and especially on that of corn—it being understood, however, that the mover desired the imposition of the 8*s*. fixed duty. The real interest of the motion and the debate lay in the certainty that it must elicit from the ministers some declaration of their intentions about the Corn laws: and in the course of it, Sir R. Peel declared that no proposition about the Corn laws would be brought forward this session. But Mr. Gladstone saved the agricultural interest from any false reliance on the stability of the Corn law, by admitting that the whole question of restriction lay in the extent to which the country was able to bear the application of the principles of free trade. The opposition members now began, with good reason, to treat the Corn law as a "temporary" expedient, and everything the minister said about it as a "temporary" answer. This was felt by all the Anti-Corn-law members to be true; and they, by saying so, not only prepared the way for the total repeal of the Corn law, but prepared the agricultural party to expect it.—Lord Howick's motion could not succeed, because it was yet too soon to learn the effects of the great measures of the preceding year. No one could say yet what the Income tax would yield, nor how the timber trade and other great departments of commerce might be stimulated by the relaxation of duties which had taken place only since October. The majority against the appointment of the Committee was 115 in a House of 497.

Hansard, lxvi. 490.

Hansard, lxvi. 887.

The next approach to the great problem was made by Lord Ashley, who moved, on the 28th of February, an Address to the Sovereign, praying that she would immediately and seriously consider what could be done for the religious and moral education of the working classes.—In addition to the difficulties always attending the education question—(difficulties which have been exhibited at a prior period of our history)—there was now one in connexion with the peculiar reputation of the mover—both in and out of the House. It had by this time become a sort of custom in parliament to praise Lord Ashley's philanthropy, and declare expressly a belief that it was unquestionably sincere—a practice which gave an impression of its being questioned by somebody. The cause of this was, not that Lord Ashley was not a humane man; not that he spared time and effort to aid the suffering; but that the direction of his philanthropy was strange and questionable. His residence was in an agricultural county where the labourers were reduced to the lowest condition then known to Englishmen. It was so on his father's estates; on the estates to which, in the course of nature, he was to succeed: yet he did not take under his protection his nearest neighbours, with whose needs he was, or ought to be, best acquainted; but constituted himself the champion of the Lancashire operatives, whose families had been earning 3*l.* per week, while the peasant families, his neighbours, were earning from 8*s.* to 10*s.* per week, living on food too mean and scanty to support strength, and sleeping under rotten thatch which let in the rain. Lord Ashley was agitating for the personal safety and for the education of the class which was actually the most enlightened, and the best able to take care of itself, of any working-class in England, while the agricultural labourers of his own county were in a state of desperate ignorance and reckless despair, which demanded all his efforts to redress. Knowing nothing of "the manufacturing system," as it was called, he had to depend for information on persons from Lancashire and other mill-districts: and it was notorious that his informants were not always respectable, and that he was largely duped; while he need but have gone into the hovels of his father's peasantry to have seen misery, and mental and moral destitution, which could not be matched in the worst retreats of the manufacturing population. Proofs came to light, from time to time, of the bad character and unjustifiable procedure of Lord Ashley's correspondents and visitors from

Lord Ashley. Hansard, lxvii. 75.

1843. Lancashire; and it was these things that cast a doubt—not on the sincerity of his benevolence—but on his right to assume the position of patron of the operatives in parliament. Amidst all the protestations and complaints which were lavished there, there was a general persuasion of something unsound; that Lord Ashley mistook the character of the manufacturing class; that he confounded two orders of social evils—town evils and factory evils; and that he had much underrated the intelligence and the resources of the factory population. This partly accounts for the uncertain action of the House generally on Lord Ashley's enterprises; while, it need not be said, he was disliked and slightly regarded by the manufacturing interest in the House, as a man who meddled with what he did not understand, and who strove to set aside the great natural laws of society, for the sake of favouring a class who were, above all others of their rank, able to take care of themselves. One anecdote will suffice to indicate the state of feeling which must have existed between Lord Ashley and the Economist section of the House. While the final struggle about the Corn law was going forward, a letter was picked up at Lord Ashley's club, which was evidently dropped from his pocket—it being open and addressed to him. The waiter who picked it up enclosed it in an envelope, and sent it to the office of the Anti-Corn-law League, where it was opened and read as a matter of business, without any suspicion of what it was about. The letter was from a Lancashire correspondent of Lord Ashley's, who wrote that there was no hope of carrying Lord Ashley's measure of that session but by blackening the character of four mill firms, whose names were given. These mill-owners happened to be of the very first order—men who had provided schools for the children of their operatives, who had built model houses for their people, opened lecture and reading rooms, and baths, and places of recreation; who had spontaneously spent many thousands of pounds in the largest liberality towards their industrial neighbours, and were ordinarily on terms of strong good-will with them. This letter was discussed by the Council of the League; and the question was debated whether Mr. Hume, or Mr. Villiers, should not be requested to produce this letter in the House as a specimen of the quality of Lord Ashley's informants from the factory districts. On the whole, it was thought better simply to return the letter to its owner, because, though the League Council had come into possession of the document quite innocently, the trick of the club-house waiter might be charged upon them; and the effect of the letter might be destroyed by any disgrace attaching to the act of its production. How Lord Ashley regarded the letter, there was no evidence to show. The proof amounted merely to his being in correspondence with a disreputable informant. But the story discloses the state of feeling existing between him and the Economist section of the House, who certainly felt themselves justified in calling upon him to do one of two things—to apply himself to the redress of the ignorance and woes of the agricultural population, whose abodes lay round about his own, and whose case he could investigate for himself; or to turn over his championship of the factory classes to some member of the House who had that knowledge of the manufacturing districts in which he was deficient.

Mines and Collieries Act. In 1842, Lord Ashley had brought forward a Bill on behalf of a set of people who really appeared to have been neglected by all mankind, and whose case, when exposed by Lord Ashley, startled parliament and the country. 1843. People who move about above ground, in the face of day, may exhibit their own case, and hope to have it considered by those who look on; but it now appeared that there was a class moving about underground, in the mines and coal pits of England and Scotland, whose condition of suffering and brutalization exceeded all that had ever been known, or could be believed. A Commission of Inquiry, obtained by Lord Ashley, laid open a scene which shocked the whole country. Women were employed as beasts of burden: children were stunted and diseased, beaten, overworked, oppressed in every way: both women and children made to crawl on all fours in the passages of the pits, dragging carts by a chain passing from the waist between the legs: and all lived in an atmosphere of filth and profligacy which could hardly leave a thought or feeling untainted by vice. This was seen at once to be a special, as well as an extreme case; and a Bill for the relief of the women and children of the colliery population was passed with a rapidity which somewhat injured its quality. It was known that a strong opposition would be raised if the thing were not done at once. It was certain that a multitude of women and children would be thrown out of employment after the passage of the Bill: and not a few persons declared the Commissioners' Report to be full of exaggeration: and the great permanent objection remained, of the disastrous consequences of interfering with the labour market. The great majority of the nation however felt that it was better to have a large burden thrown on the parishes for a time than to let such abuses continue: that, making every allowance for exaggeration, the facts were horrible: and that, the labour market being already interfered with by Factory Bills, this was not the point to stop at. So the Bill passed, with some amendments which Lord Ashley submitted to, rather than wait. Hansard, lxv. 1097. —By this Bill, women were excluded from mining and colliery labour altogether. Boys were not to be employed under the age of ten years: and the term of apprenticeship was limited. The Secretary of State was empowered to appoint Inspectors of Mines and Collieries, to see that the provisions of the Bill were carried out.—The new law took effect after nine months from its date. The operation has, from time to time, been reported as beneficial; and, though it has been found difficult to prevent women from getting down to work in the pits after the habits of a life had made other employment unsuitable or impossible to them, the pressure upon parish or other charity funds turned out to be less than had been anticipated. It was a great thing to have put a stop to the employment of women in toil wholly unsuited to their frame and their natural duties; and to have broken in upon a system of child-slavery which could never have existed so long in our country, if it had not been hidden in the chambers of the earth.

It was between the passage of this Act and its coming into operation that Lord Ashley moved to address the Queen on the subject of a religious education for the working classes: and this brought out from Sir James Graham a statement of a government scheme of education, which was to be engrafted upon a Factory Bill of Lord Ashley's order of legislation—a law which should control the destinies of the manufacturing population, without touching the more depressed order of agricultural labourers. Government Factory Bill. Hansard, lxvii. 422. It was probably owing in part to this, and to the prevalent belief that the government had been stimulated in

1843. its action by a fear of Lord Ashley's activity and pertinacity, insufficiently enlightened by philosophy and experience, that the education clauses of Sir James Graham's Factory Bill failed as they did, and that the Dissenters committed themselves against it in a spirit of enmity which lowered their position more than anything they had done and suffered for a century before.

Education Clauses.

In order to judge of the government scheme and the opposition to it, it must be remembered with what difficulty any beginning whatever had been made; how jealous was the Church of any admission of Dissenters to the public funds for educational purposes; and how unacceptable to the Dissenters was the idea of compulsory education at all. The difficulty now was that the proposed compulsory education was to be provided for that class—for the children of the manufacturing districts—where the interest of the Dissenters was strongest; while the agricultural classes—the neglected charge of the Church—were left over for a future measure. It ought to be acknowledged on every hand that here was a call for magnanimity all round. It was an occasion for the Church to acknowledge her neglect, and hasten to repair it. It was an occasion for the Dissenters to be modest about their much greater exertions for the education of their own members in the large towns, in consideration of the vast deal which it was not in their power to do. It was an occasion for all parties bravely to face the fearful truth of the amount of popular ignorance, and to decide deliberately whether it was best for all to yield some of their desires about doctrinal religious instruction, or for hundreds of thousands of children to pass off into utter darkness—ignorant not only of all religious doctrine whatever, but of the plainest truths and practices of morals. The Church was more equal to the occasion than the Dissenters. The Church yielded more than she had ever offered before to the consciences of Dissenters; and, when the Dissenters threw out the educational part of the government scheme, the Church set vigorously to work to raise funds by voluntary subscriptions, for the extension and improvement of the National Church Schools. Whatever may be thought of the quality of the education given in those schools, indisputable proof was afforded in the exertions of the Church during 1843, of the earnestness of the desire of the Church for the education of the people, as she conceived of education. The Dissenters at the same time appear to have erred—naturally, perhaps, but widely and fatally. In their fear of "compromise"—a fear usually so honourable and so wise—they forgot that this was a case in which loss of time was fatal. They had been right hitherto in rejecting measures of religious liberty which had anything unsound in them—in waiting from year to year for a perfect Marriage Bill, for instance, rather than put up with a partial one: but in the present case, every year of delay removed thousands of children beyond the reach of education, and thus consigned them to risks and injury immeasurably more fatal than any kind or degree of religious error could possibly have been. Some of the Dissenters saw and felt this, and perceived it to be their duty to take the most liberal scheme they could obtain in the first place; try to enlarge it afterwards; and continue to prosecute their voluntary efforts as before, so as to make the government measure a supplement to their own exertions, instead of a substitute for them. This, however, required a magnanimity of which all were not capable: and the large majority of the Dissenters were led away to overrate the extent and quality of the education they could impart; to overlook the large area where they could not work at all; and to disregard or deny the great truth that the voluntary principle is inapplicable to education because it is precisely those who need education most that are least capable of demanding it, desiring it, and even conceiving of it. The opposition of the Dissenters prevailed. The opportunity was lost of taking the Church in a genial and liberal mood, and of providing for the children of various sects being reared as brethren, while instructed each in the doctrine of his own communion. All that was possible was done for the perpetuating of sectarian rancour, and for hounding on ignorance and bigotry to new assaults on the innocence and peace of society. By this mistake, it is now pretty well understood that the Dissenters lost more in character and influence than they can regain in a long course of years: and, with all their large promises, sincere but rash, they have done nothing effectual in the way of substitution for the measure they rejected.

Hansard, lxvii. 422.

The outline of the government measure was this. Factory children had been legislated for before, as we have seen: and, as was anticipated, such legislation had been inoperative. It was now proposed that factory children between the ages of eight and thirteen should not work for more than six hours and a half per day: that they should be obliged to attend schools provided for the purpose; the children of churchmen, catholics, and dissenters, being committed, for certain appointed hours in every week, to the charge of their respective pastors for religious instruction according to the creed of their parents. The measure was enlarged so as to include all pauper children in the towns, and all other children whose parents would consent to their entering the schools. Thus the larger proportion of children then uneducated was provided for; and a promise was held out of an extension of the system to include the neglected part of the agricultural population, in a short time. As there was nothing here which need interfere with any existing schools, and as the most careful provision was made for the equality within the schools of children of all sects, there would really have been nothing for the dissenters to protest against if it had not been for the trusteeship provision. There were to be seven trustees to each school under the Act; four of whom were to be elective, but the other three must be the clergyman of the district and two churchwardens. This would almost necessarily yield a majority of Church trustees over dissenters; but, as it is difficult to see how any freer arrangement could be offered in a society where an Established Church exists at all, the opposition to it amounted to a declaration that there should be no general scheme of education in coexistence with an Establishment; and the prospect of Popular Education was postponed to the day when the Church should be overthrown as an Establishment.

Within the House, all went well. Lord J. Russell, while offering some few objections, gave the scheme his hearty support as a whole: and men of all faiths and parties showed themselves disposed to concede what was necessary to the accomplishment of the object. The Queen's reply to the Address was cordial. But presently the Dissenters were up and stirring in opposition; and their speeches at public meetings and the language of some of their petitions evinced a misconception of the measure which showed that it was doomed. The remainder of the Session would not suffice for disabusing those

Hansard, lxvii. 354.

1843.

who had been so unaccountably misled about the facts of the measure. An inquirer here and there had the curiosity to ascertain how many, of all the alarmed dissenters he was acquainted with, had seen the Bill, or learned for themselves what its provisions really were: and scarcely an instance was found of any one having obtained his information at first hand. It was a case of panic; and the result was shown in circulars full of misstatements, in public meetings full of violence, and in the presentation of such a mass of petitions against the Bill as had never been seen in modern times.—On the 1st of May, Sir James Graham brought forward explanations and some important amendments, enlarging the number of trustees, and so altering the wording of the Bill as to make clear the entire independence of the children of different sects, in regard to religious instruction and worship. But it was useless to explain and concede. Nearly 200 petitions against the Bill were presented by one member in one day; and Lord J. Russell was charged with one from the city of London, signed by 55,000 persons. On the 15th of June, Sir James Graham announced, with deep regret, that the government felt itself compelled to give up the Educational clauses of the Bill: and on the 19th, he proposed to carry forward the rest of the measure.

Hansard, lxviii. 1103.

Educational clauses withdrawn. Hansard, lxix. 1568.

New Bill. Hansard, lxxii. 277.

At the beginning of the next Session, accordingly, Sir James Graham introduced a Factory Bill, divested of the Education clauses; and it was the fate of this Bill which indicated the uncertain mind and temper of the House in regard to Lord Ashley's philanthropic enterprises. When this Bill went into Committee, Lord Ashley moved a clause by which the working day for women and young persons was reduced from twelve to ten hours. In the course of his speech, he made statements which showed that he did not understand the nature of the labour employed in the cotton manufacture any more than the great natural laws which regulate labour and production. In this speech, he went too far for the government, as well as the Economist party, though he was supported by the many who indulge feeling at the expense of reason, and in indolence of thought;—by the same sort of men as formerly strove to regulate wages, food, and dress, by Act of Parliament. Sir James Graham opposed him with pain, seeing how the very subsistence of two millions of people was concerned in any legislation which should tamper with the cotton manufacture—that great branch of industry which had been introduced under a system of freedom from parliamentary interference. Sir James Graham not only saw this as an Economist, but he felt his responsibility, as Secretary for the Home Department, in regard to any legislative interference which might affect the maintenance of two millions of people. He saw the consequences of abridging "by one-sixth the whole period allowed for the replacement of capital and the production of profit:" and he would not venture the risk of a corresponding reduction of the wages of the workpeople. The men must stop work when the women and boys stopped; and such a legislative interference with the natural course of manufacture was not to be adventured for any reasons which had been alleged. The thing to be done was clear to his mind—to educate the people, so as to enable them to take care of their one great property—their labour, and not to deprive them by law of the disposal of that, their only property. To provide by law leisure and opportunity for children to be educated was one thing:—to stop the labour of working men by restrict-

Hansard, lxxiii. 1073—1101.

Hansard, lxxiii. 1101—1110.

ing the labour of their wives was another, and he must oppose all interference which was, in fact, tyranny under the name of humanity. These were also the views of Sir R. Peel; and the government was considered so far pledged against Lord Ashley's motion as that the majority of nine which he obtained at first was considered a serious defeat.

Hansard, lxxiii. 1263.

There was a hope still. When the eighth clause came to be discussed, Lord Ashley would have to move the substitution of ten hours for twelve; and government would proceed that far with the Bill, in hope that the House would reconsider this important matter. When the time came, the House voted in a way which showed that it did not understand the business before it. There was a majority of three against the proposal of twelve hours; and then, immediately after, a majority of seven against ten hours. Sir James Graham said that as the House would not consent to the term of either ten or twelve hours, the government must take time to consider what could be done next.—The result was that Lord Ashley gave way—permitting government to withdraw the Bill, and bring in another, which was the same in all respects, except that it contained no clause specifying the hours of labour. On the third reading of the new Bill, Lord Ashley moved that the hours of labour should be restricted to eleven per day for three years from the next October, and to ten from that time forward. The debate reads strangely to any one familiar with the life and lot of the working classes. A multitude of the operatives who had petitioned for a Ten Hour Bill had been tempted by the placards which were seen all over Manchester; "Less work. More wages. Sign for Ten Hours." But now, the Ten Hour men in the House talked glibly of the way in which the inevitable reduction of wages would be compensated by moral advantages; and of the ease with which parliament could retrace its steps, if the reduction should be found to go too far. The opponents of this rash and meddling legislation declared themselves appalled at the prospect of diminished wages of which their opponents talked so lightly, and about which they desired to leave the working class no choice: and it was pointed out that if the step was retraced, it would be on account of the fatality—which would then have become irreparable—of the loss of our foreign trade. Sooner than this could happen, however, as experienced men felt and said, the law would be evaded, and, by some means or other, practically set aside: for no law could work in defiance of the needs of capitalists and labourers; and then we should have perpetrated the unspeakable mischief of breaking a solemn promise to the people, and teaching them to despise the law and distrust the law-makers. The debate ended in a majority of 138 against the Ten Hour limitation; and the Bill was passed by the Commons with only seven dissentient voices. It was not much discussed in the Lords; and it presently became law.

Vacillation of the House.
Hansard, lxxiii. 1460, 1463.
Hansard, lxxiv. 915.
Decision against the Ten Hour clause.
Hansard, lxxiv 1104.

In the next session, 1845, Lord Ashley introduced two Bills, which were taken up and carried by the government: one bringing young people employed in print-works under the protection of the Factory measure; and the other, providing for the better care of lunatics. This last was a good step taken in an unquestionable cause. As for the Factory legislation, it is almost as melancholy to witness the efforts made to cure the evils of our overwrought competitive system as to contemplate the evils themselves. First, we have

Hansard, lxxvii. 638; lxxxi. 180.

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allowed our operative population to grow up—in less ignorance than some other classes, it is true, but with a wholly insufficient knowledge of their own condition and liabilities. They have overcrowded the labour-market, so as to be compelled to work harder—not than other classes of labourers who earn smaller wages, but than is good for anybody to labour: and then we try to mend the matter by forbidding them to sell more than a given amount of their labour. It is not thus that the excessive competition which is the cause of the mischief can be reduced; and the true friends of the working freeman felt that he lost nothing, while he retained his liberty, by the failure of Lord Ashley's Ten Hour measures of 1844.

Debate on Colonization. Hansard, lxviii. 481.

Lord Ashley wrought in a better direction when he heartily seconded Mr. Charles Buller's motion (in the session of 1843) in favour of extensive and systematic Colonization, as a means of lessening the excessive competition in the labour market at home, and of opening new fields of subsistence and of commerce, to the mutual advantage of the colonists and of the stayers at home. Though the discussion did not lead to any immediate practical result, it was eminently useful in directing attention to the true principles of relief, and affording large information as to our colonizing prospects. We shall hereafter see what was doing in this field.

Early Closing Movement.

Case of Governesses.

While Parliament was thus almost exclusively occupied with beneficent legislation, and what was intended as such—thus indicating the peculiar pressure of the time—society out of doors was following in the same track. We see, with great satisfaction, about this time, a rising movement in favour of shortening the hours of trading in shops. Here, where exchange and not production is concerned, there can be no reasonable objection to bringing the exhausting labour of shop attendance within endurable limits. As long as the fair convenience of purchasers is considered, and the shops are kept open for the length of an average working day, a timely closing of the shops is a benefit to the tradesman and his assistants in every way. The one thing to be done was to induce the tradesmen in the same line to agree to close their shops at the same hour: and this has been found not difficult, on the whole. The early closing movement began to be talked about at this time; and a prospect was opening to the shopman and shopwoman of evening reading, or social converse, or rest, or (if their fatigue permitted it) a breath of fresh air at other times than on Sundays.—And we note, also, the commencement of the movement on behalf of one of the most suffering classes of society—the Governesses. The position of this unfortunate class is so anomalous, so unnatural, and, at our own particular period, so depressed, that the efforts of all the benevolent among us could do but little for relief. But, from this time, it was at least certain that the neglect of society was at an end; and this was the clear beginning of the end which must one day arrive. From this time, some few of the suffering multitude of female educators would be sheltered in their latter years, and tended in sickness, and aided to provide resources against a season of age and sickness. We were to have among us asylums for aged governesses, and homes for such as were unemployed; and methods of insurance or deposit for annuities for such as were earning salaries; and, better than all these, an awakening of society to the inquiry why this class is one which suffers so bitterly; and whether it can be justifiable to have among

1843.

us a class so indispensable, and yet so unhappy. It may be hoped that there were employers of governesses who were now moved to consider whether they could not afford some solace of sympathy, and respect, and social converse, and improvement, and amusement, to the inmate of their house whose position was one of utter loneliness in the midst of numbers.

Improvement of dwellings.

We notice at this time also projects for improving the dwellings of the poor. We read of Model Lodging Houses ; of mansions for families where, at a less cost than had been paid for the most wretched roosting-places, poor families might be provided with clean and airy rooms, with a supply of water, light, and warmth. Suggestions were even made of a common kitchen, wash-house and bakehouse, and other devices of domestic socialism which made the timid look to see whether the principle of Communism was gaining ground in England, as it was reported to be in France, Germany, and Italy. The greater number felt, however, that it mattered little what name such projects were called by, if they supplied the necessaries and comforts of life, on a principle independent of alms-giving, to those who could enjoy them only by means of the economy of Association.

The Queen's Letter.

Hansard, lxiii. 767.

The Queen's Letter was still looked to as a means of relief for the still starving people in the manufacturing districts. This royal letter was prepared by the advice, and under the eye, of the Privy Council. It was addressed to the Archbishop of Canterbury ; and it directed that the Bishops should see that it was read on an appointed Sunday, in all the Churches, that the people might be moved to charitable contribution for the relief of the distress ; their contributions to be collected from house to house in the course of the week following the publication of the letter. The transaction, which began in May, 1842, was spread over some months—Lord Wharncliffe declaring, in the next session, that the sum raised under this letter amounted to about 75,000*l.* which was expended in the most distressed manufacturing counties. It was thought to be a mistake at the time to have recourse to so extreme a method of appeal in a season when all hearts that could be so reached were already opened and softened by the indications of unequalled distress on every hand ; and the smallness of the sum raised in response to the royal invitation in proportion to those provided by private subscription seems to show that there was a failure of judgment and taste in the act. But it combines with other incidents of the time to show that the great social tendency of the day was to consider the poor. This consideration occupied almost all the time of parliament, and was most prominent in the thought of the country—eminently combining with and stimulating the action of the most powerful body in the community at that time—the Anti-Corn-Law League.

Hansard, lxvi. 766.

CHAPTER VIII.

1841—46.

Movements in Ireland. Spectator, 1841, p. 3.

IN January, 1841, Mr. O'Connell said, at a meeting of the Repeal Association of Dublin, "I shall, for my part, vote for the Whigs on all party questions, in order to keep them in: but I tell them honestly and openly, that they have lost altogether the hearts of the Irish people; and nothing but the loud cry for Repeal shall henceforth be heard among us. . . . . I did not resume the Repeal agitation till I saw how utterly unable the Whigs were to effect anything." It might be asked why Mr. O'Connell desired to keep in the Whigs if they had lost the hearts of the Irish people, and were utterly powerless. It appears that he really did suppose that a Conservative Ministry—such as the Peel administration was by anticipation supposed to be—would treat Ireland as the rank old Orangemen of the north would have her treated; and that the alternative was merely between nothing being done for Ireland and her being cruelly oppressed. Just before the Bed-chamber dispute, when it was known that Sir R. Peel might come in at any moment if he would, and that it was the "Irish difficulty" which prevented his doing so, Mr. O'Connell was looking round anxiously for every means of making the Irish question popular in England—even requesting an English author, whom he thought likely to be listened to, to travel in Ireland, under facilities provided by himself, in order to report upon the condition of the country. His apprehension of insufferable coercion from a Conservative government was probably real: and it led him, from this date, into that monstrous agitation for the Repeal of the Union which was as fatal to himself as to his unhappy country. From this time, he began to reap his retribution for his rash, unprincipled, and most mischievous political conduct. From this time, he drew down upon himself a burden of embarrassment and irksome responsibility, under which, after long perplexity and anguish of mind, he sank spirit-broken and terror-stricken, leaving a name which was soon to be cursed by his countrymen as fervently as it had ever been blessed.—Probably, no one now supposes him to have been sincere in any expectation or desire to obtain a Repeal of the Union; for nothing can be more futile, or more audacious in absurdity, than his replies to Lord Charlemont and others who objected to the efficacy of Repeal, and showed that if it was obtained to-morrow, the redemption of Ireland would remain to be achieved, with less chance of unity of councils and dispassionateness of action than under the Imperial connexion: but he was probably of opinion that the best means of making Ireland attended to and cared for was by making her feared; and that the best way of making her feared was by pushing the Repeal agitation.

Spectator, 1841, p. 28.

1841.

O'Connell's Proceedings.

In this year, we find him waging war against British manufacturers. "His pantaloons, waistcoat, and coat, were Irish. . . . . . He considered the pleasure of giving employment to Irish hands part of the value of the price he gave for any thing." He might speak for himself; but he could not expect poorer Irishmen to indulge themselves in this sort of luxury; and the effort to exclude English manufactures failed, though O'Connell passed a law to that effect, and even attempted to enforce it, in opposition to the Dublin magistracy.—Mr. O'Connell made journeys, and attended dinners, for the furtherance of Repeal; and in February, we find him declaring that he had been refused post-horses, through Orange intimidation; from which fact he drew the conviction, that if he had travelled on the day first fixed, his carriage would have certainly been destroyed, and himself probably murdered.—In March, at a meeting on the Curragh of Kildare, he protested against a published calculation of the length of his agitation, from his age being sixty-five. "Ten or eleven of his uncles and aunts lived to be above ninety;" and the prospect of his scope of agitation was indefinite, as he "could make as much of three years as most men could of thirty." In April, we find him holding forth on the grievous subject of rents, and proposing plans, procured from a committee of his own, for securing a tenancy of not less than twenty years for every man on the land, with power to all to purchase small farms, paying for them by instalments, with the rent. At the same date, he admitted the difficulty of enforcing his order to exclude British manufactures, and accounted for it by audaciously declaring that it was owing to an influx of English workmen, "who had come over to keep down the wages of the Irish operative."—In the same month, certain American sympathizers sent over some hundreds of pounds for the furtherance of the Repeal cause; and O'Connell declared that the Irish parliament was not dead—only slept—and would be awakened now by the crowing of the American cocks across the Atlantic. He took occasion to stimulate the Repeal wardens to augment their funds, saying that two millions of Repealers—and he could not do with less than two millions of Repealers—would yield, at 1s. per man, £100,000.—By this time, O'Connell's "Board of Trade" had discovered that it would be necessary to supersede the Dublin shop-keepers by "marts for the exclusive sale of Irish commodities," as the shop-keepers would not join in the movement to exclude British manufactures.—By the middle of May it had become clear that Sir R. Peel was coming into power; and O'Connell proposed a simultaneous meeting on a Sunday, of all the parishes of Ireland, in order to implore the Queen "not to receive into her confidence the bitter and malignant ancient enemies of her faithful Irish people." Before this month was over, the Repeal meetings in the provinces were becoming grand shows; one on the Hill of Kilnoe, in Clare, consisting of 100,000 men; and another at Ardsullas, leading the way in that organization which afterwards gave their formidable character to such meetings. The people came in companies, led by their priests from distances of ten or fifteen miles, with Temperance bands playing before them. A bed-ridden old woman was carried ten miles to see the preparations made "for the salvation of her country." During the absorption of the passions of the people in the growing agitation, the diminution of crime appears remarkable. While there was "but one voice upon the breeze of heaven—Hurrah for Repeal!"—and the shout arose "from the Giants' Causeway to Cape Clear—from Connemara to the Hill of Howth," the judges were congratulating the juries on

Spectator, 1841, p. 29.

Ibid. p. 128.

Ibid. p. 272.

Ibid. p. 344.

Ibid. p. 392.

Ibid. p. 466.

Ibid. p. 582.

there being few prisoners for trial, or "the dock was empty."—In August, the Liberator's speeches contain a curious medley; announcing his intended measure for securing to every man a long or perpetual holding of the land he lives on; desiring the people not to rebel as long as they could help it; intimating that steam-boats could bring aid from America in ten days; and longing for the hour which he declared might soon arrive when the Queen, flying from the Tory enemies of her throne, should take refuge in the arms of her faithful Irish. To these he added two curious declarations; that he had always been opposed to the introduction of a Poor law into Ireland; and that he had arranged to introduce hand-loom weaving into Ireland, trusting to achieve an exclusion of the productions of British power-looms. By this time, the Repeal meetings were "immense;" and the priests of one diocese which contained 105 had all joined but one. A member was now added to the Association, whose accession was uproariously hailed—Mr. O'Connell's latest grandchild, aged four days. Nothing was omitted which could amuse or gratify the people.—In October, the government papers in London intimated plainly that the Cabinet intended to take no notice of any nonsense in Ireland; but that any acts obviously dangerous to the general peace would be put down with the strong hand; and an appeal was made to the newspaper press on the Conservative side not to record the boasts and menaces of the Repealers, as nothing but neglect seemed to be necessary to empty the benches at Repeal meetings. This declaration of the *Standard*, in October, 1841, was regarded as an indication of the policy of the new Administration in regard to the Repeal movement.—Mr. O'Connell had before declined the office of Lord Mayor of Dublin. He now changed his mind, and accepted the dignity, for the facilities it would afford for extending the Repeal cause.—In November, the movement had become important enough to be visited with opposition and defection. A prominent member withdrew, convinced by the arguments of opponents that Ireland wanted peace and quiet more than political changes; and an intrepid parish priest refused to collect Repeal Rent from his flock, because they were already under the pressure of poverty. By this time, the new census was out: and Mr. O'Connell made use of it to charge upon the British government a "wholesale extermination of the Irish people"—"a frightful slaughter of human beings,"—because the population had increased at a considerably slower rate during the last than the preceding ten years. At every meeting in Dublin now contributions from the United States were handed in, amounting by this time to many hundreds of pounds. The O'Connell rent was also swelling—the sum collected in the Dublin district alone this year exceeding £2,000.—In a month, it became clear how the new Lord Mayor meant to use his office for the benefit of the Repeal cause. In one hour and a half he admitted seventy-three new freemen—all of them having avouched themselves Catholics, and "of the right sort." The dignitary declared the business to be "going on swimmingly;" and that there would be no need for him to be made permanent Lord Mayor by perpetual re-election, because he could put things in train during this year, and get a sound coadjutor appointed to succeed him, who would do the same in his turn. Such avowals appear to have created no disgust among his followers, amidst their loud talk of political right and justice.

Spectator, 1841, p. 749.

Ibid. p. 1109.

Ibid. p. 1157.

All means to their end seem to have been, not only fair, but laudable in their eyes. These preparations indicate what might be expected from a subsequent time. 1841—46.

1842. In 1842, however, there was something like a suspension of the Repeal agitation. The harvest having been bad, the people suffered cruelly, in many of the rural districts. Food riots and agrarian disturbances fill the foreground of the picture during that year;—attacks upon flour-mills; people roaming the streets in the towns of Galway, and collecting before every potato storehouse; lives lost at Ennis; and a special commission sent down to scenes of disturbance. The next year was that in which the Repeal agitation reached its height.

1843. "Monster Meetings." It is at this time that we begin to see mention of "Monster Meetings." Early in January, Mr. O'Connell announced the Repeal of the Union to be "all but immediate," if the clergy and laity would unite in their overwhelming majority: and he added, "1843 is and shall be the Repeal year." A remarkable step, and one which created great excitement in Dublin, was that Mr. O'Connell carried a Repeal petition to parliament by an overwhelming majority in the Corporation of Dublin. This was in March; and presently occurred the Monster Meeting at Trim, where 30,000 people were present. At the dinner which succeeded the meeting, the Agitator ventured upon his boldest language—talked of the scaffold, victory or the grave, and dared the young men to say whether they would be slaves, or shed their blood in the field.—At the Mullingar meeting, on the 14th of May, it appeared that every Catholic bishop in Ireland was a Repealer. To this meeting the peasantry thronged, even from a distance of forty miles; and the numbers were somewhere between 100,000 and 130,000. By this time, all pretence of assembling to petition parliament was laid aside; and parliament was spoken of with mere contempt. As the government did not interfere, the Agitator grew bolder and more threatening in his language, and more plainly invited his followers to wrest Repeal from the hand of Imperial tyranny. The government still professed its intention of relying on the ordinary powers of the law, except with regard to the holding of arms, about which a keenly-contested Bill passed through parliament during the summer. The Chancellor of Ireland, Sir Edward Sugden, removed from the Commission of the Peace Lord Ffrench and several other magistrates who had taken part in Repeal demonstrations: but this act, however much questioned in the House of Commons, was one which lay within the ordinary powers of the law.

Spectator, 1843, p. 28.

Annual Register, 1843, p. 227.

Tara Meeting. It appears as if the first serious fears of the government were excited by the Monster Meeting at Tara, on the 15th of August, where O'Connell, who provoked the old association of ideas about the bully and the coward, bragged more grandly than ever, because it seemed that the government would give him nothing to fear. He declared that he had been laughed at for saying in January that this was the Repeal year; but it was his turn to laugh now; for it was certain that before twelve months more, the parliament would be in College Green, Dublin. He believed he was "able to announce" to his hearers that not twelve months could possibly elapse, without hurrahs for the Irish parliament in College Green being heard over the land. He opened glimpses of his plan for extorting permission from the Queen for Ireland to

Annual Register, 1843, p. 231.

govern herself; and these words were addressed to an assemblage estimated by various reporters at from 500,000 to 2,000,000 of persons. The Hill of Tara was like a huge encampment. Some persons arrived over-night; others flocked in from the break of day: and after ten o'clock, imposing processions, with music and banners, converged from various points. The spot was chosen for its revolutionary associations; the old kings of Ireland having been elected on the Hill; and the rebels of 1798 having there sustained a defeat. A head-ornament, half cap, half crown, was prepared, wherewith to crown the Liberator; and there can be no doubt that the peasant multitude believed the day to be come when they were to be freed from a foreign domination, and restored to national grandeur, and universal comfort and well-being.—This appears to have been the occasion—at the dinner after the meeting—when the scheme of establishing Arbitration Courts was first recommended. The people were advised to desert and ignore the courts of law; and the magistrates who were dismissed from the Commission of the Peace on account of their Repeal opinions, were to serve as O'Connell's justices, and decide on all disputes brought before them. These Arbitration Courts did actually, for a considerable time, almost supersede the regular tribunals. Of course, the plan could not work long; and there was, perhaps, no part of the Repeal agitation, except the Temperance, that the friends of the Irish liked so well. It encouraged peace and courtesy—checked the litigious—and would probably act in the very beneficial direction of giving the people some better notion than they had before of the use and value of law. As the decisions of O'Connell's justices were not legal, their courts could not long exist; and the practice of arbitration died out, like all the Liberator's arrangements.

Spectator, 1843, p. 777.

ARBITRATION COURTS.

On Sunday, the 20th of August, another Monster Meeting was held at Roscommon—less numerous than it would have been if the tenantry of some landlords had not complained to their landlords that their attendance would be compulsory if they had not protection in staying away. Troops and police were stationed within call, but out of sight. The Agitator's tone was very warlike. After calling "Tee-totalism the finest effluence of human virtue," he said that, "if he had to go to battle," he should have the Tee-totalers with him; and there was not an army in the world that he would not fight with them.—Two days afterwards, a scheme was produced which amused and occupied the Repealers, and made them think that something was doing:—a plan of O'Connell's proposed Irish parliament. In this, there was an elaborate-looking detail of the populations of Irish towns and counties, with an apportionment of representatives; and there was something for the people to do in studying this: but there was no hint given as to how this parliament was to be procured. When pressed on that point, the Agitator declared that the Queen would grant this parliament by proclamation; and then the parliament would "legalize every thing." This is all. The most careful search into the records of the time yields nothing more;—not a trace of a practical plan, political or military;—not a particle of evidence that O'Connell was really seeking a Repeal of the Union. Unwilling as every one must be to suppose that a man so able and powerful was in fact hoaxing an anxious and suffering people for a course of years—diverting them from the benefits of the Imperial connexion to follow false lights—seducing them from peaceful industry, to rove the

Spectator, 1843, p. 801.

Ibid. p. 800.

country in a bitter holiday fashion—it is impossible for the careful inquirer to avoid the conviction that O'Connell knew that there would be no Repeal of the Union. We find marchings hither and thither, Temperance bands, Tara crowns, "purple robes with fur"—all regal—oaths and pledges, flattery of the worst parts of the Irish character, pernicious excitement of hatreds of race, paper schemes and impromptu laws, and an ardent and unremitting pushing of the demand for money; but, with all this, no word spoken or written, no act done, no purpose peeping out, which shows any practical intent of procuring Repeal.

Anti-Rent Movement.

At this harvest-time, a new method of aiding the cause began to be practised. On O'Connell promising fixity of tenure—virtual possession—to every holder of land, in case of an Irish parliament once assembling in Dublin, the Catholic Bishop of Armagh and other priests began to give "warning" that the people would sooner or later refuse to pay their rents. The warning was precisely one which was likely to work its own fulfilment: and we find the priests here and there preaching to their flocks that they should gather in their harvest, lay by what they wanted for themselves, and then, if any was left, they might pay it over for rent. As an improvement upon this, bands of strangers now appeared from a distance—200 of one party on a Sunday morning—and cut and carried the produce of small farms, bringing cars with them for the purpose, and leaving the tenant to show his landlord his bare fields as excuse for non-payment of his rent. These collusive thefts, perpetrated in open day, and amidst the sympathy of the neighbourhood, are among the worst features of the time.—Another was the coercion used to raise money for the cause—the reapers at this harvest being required to produce their Repeal tickets (receipts for a shilling) before they could obtain work. "If O'Connell knew," said one of these reapers, who was walking back from Meath to Drogheda, with blistered feet, to fetch his Repeal ticket—"if O'Connell knew what a comfort a shilling is to our families, he would let us alone." This was said just at the time when the Queen, in the House of Lords, was expressing her sorrow for the injury caused to the Irish people by the seditious efforts of the agitators of the day. She was resolved to sustain the Union, and was endeavouring to preserve the tranquillity of Ireland by the use of the ordinary powers of the law, being unwilling to resort to measures of coercion, and feeling assured that she might rely on the co-operation of a multitude of faithful subjects in Ireland. Mr. O'Connell pronounced this Speech to be "an excess of impudence and stupidity combined:" but, perhaps aware that it might appear ludicrous for an O'Connell to accuse Queen Victoria of "impudence," he laid all the blame on her Majesty's Ministers. The Ministers had carried one coercive measure during the session—the Irish Arms Act—by which the possessors of arms were obliged to register them, to have them branded by the appointed government officer, and take out a license for holding them. This Act was brought forward at the request of a large number of orderly inhabitants of Ireland, who were compelled by the state of the times to keep arms enough for their own defence, but dreaded a seizure of them. There was little difference between this Bill and many which had been passed for a long course of years—even up to the date of Lord Morpeth's Bill of 1838: but it was made the ground of party conflict in the House. The debates were long

Spectator, 1843, p. 872.

Hansard, lxxi. 1009.

Irish Arms Act.

1841—46. and angry; and every conceivable Irish topic was brought into them. The Bill, which had been first debated on the 29th of May, did not leave the Commons till the 9th of August. The Lords passed it rapidly; and it became law on the 22nd of the same month. It afforded a great subject to the Agitator at the meetings.

Hansard, lxxi. 470.

But, by this time, two sorts of narratives of those meetings were getting abroad. According to the Repealers themselves, the whole country was up, in one flame of patriotism, on occasion of a monster meeting;—decorating houses and roads, carrying the crown-cap of the Liberator, marching with solemn determination, as to a battle-field, bearing banners which demanded "Repeal or Blood," and swearing on the ground to lay down their lives for the cause, in response to O'Connell's voice, which was heard to the bounds of the assemblage. On the other hand, it was pointed out that no human voice could make its utterance heard by 100,000 people; the decorations were denied; the banners had not been seen; the people went to the stubble field or hill smiling and chatting, as to a mere sight; and when there, they waited only for the arrival of O'Connell, when, having nothing more to stay for, they poured off in all directions, leaving a few hundreds within reach of the voices from the platform, to do the business of listening, feeling, and responding by cheers. There were, besides, Conservative reports which treated the movement with a contempt as absurd and forced as the exaggerations of the Repealers. The government acted on the statements of the Repealers themselves, who now talked of marshalling their "troops," and of their "Repeal cavalry;" and issued "regulations," in order to "muster-march, and parade." A Monster Meeting was appointed to be held at Clontarf, three miles from Dublin, on Sunday, the 8th of October; and the preparations assumed such a military air, that the government thought it time to interfere. On the 7th, about the middle of the day, a proclamation by the Viceroy and Privy Council was issued, which declared the public peace to be endangered by such practices as had taken place at late Repeal meetings, and were contemplated now; warned all persons to abstain from attendance at the Clontarf meeting; and enjoined all official persons to be aiding in the suppression of the meeting.—The Agitator called together *his* Council, spoke "with marked calmness," announced that in consequence of the proceedings of the government, there would be no meeting the next day, and entreated all persons to use their influence in preventing any assemblage. The Association issued a proclamation, desiring the people to stay at home; and a large number of members volunteered to station themselves on the approaches to Clontarf, to turn back all comers.—Early in the morning, the main strength of the garrison of Dublin was so placed on the field, as that all who arrived found themselves in a narrow lane between soldiers, and compelled to pass on by the pressure from behind. Nobody could find out where the hustings were. They had been removed in the night. Nobody could see O'Connell. He stayed away. Instead of him, there was seen Thomas Steele, "the Head Pacificator of Ireland," waving a green bough of Peace, and moving over the ground, crying, "Home—home—home!"

Northern Whig, Oct. 1843.

CLONTARF MEETING.

Annual Register, 1843, p. 234.

Of course, O'Connell declared now that this Clontarf meeting was to have been the last; and of course this was not believed by those who had charge of the public peace. Not only was there no reason why the Agitator should stop at this particular meeting, but the government had sound reasons for thinking that he would not. It now appears that he was in a difficulty which had begun to weigh upon him, and under which he afterwards lost spirits and courage. He had called out the people, and now did not know what to do with them. He had accustomed them to political demonstrations as shows; and he must devise novelties to keep them amused and peaceable. It was probably an act of mercy in the government to stop him at this point of embarrassment. It is certain that his anxiety about keeping the peace was not surpassed by their own, when the affair had reached its present critical stage. Amidst the sudden hush of dismay, caused by the Clontarf proclamation throughout Dublin, O'Connell went about with an air of extreme calmness, and with an expression of countenance which, in unguarded moments, showed that his mind was now really harassed—no doubt by the pressing necessity of immediately striking out a new course.

In England, almost every body was relieved and pleased that government had at last interfered with a procedure which was wholly incompatible with public peace and order under an established government. It had been observed that Cabinet meetings had become frequent within a week; and that the Viceroy, Lord de Grey, had repaired hastily to Dublin from London, instead of travelling into Yorkshire as had been planned. It had long been a question among men of all parties why O'Connell remained unchecked; and now that he proposed to muster his "Repeal Cavalry" within three miles of the Irish capital, no one could say that the time for a check had not fully come. Why the thing was done hastily at last, so that the notice against assembling was perilously short, appears never to have been fully explained. It is probable that some secret information reached the government which precipitated their measures.

On the Monday, O'Connell's words were watched for at the meeting of the Repeal Association. One of his topics was the cruelty of government in keeping the soldiers standing all day at Clontarf for nothing. He quizzed the Viceroy, and complimented the soldiery and the people. He talked of simultaneous meetings all over Ireland, and of plans for buying up debts on Irish estates by an association of gentlemen; but these things were to be done hereafter, at some distant and unfixed time; and no indication appears of his having decided on any immediate course. He spoke of laying before the House of Commons, in the first week of the session, his scheme for an Irish parliament, but made no reference to his late declaration that 1843 was the great Repeal year. It was now the 9th of October, and no progress had been made. There had been nothing but talk and show; and the educated people of Ireland, the great middle class, were as hostile as ever to Repeal. The peasantry were the Repeal host. They were truly formidable, on account of their sanguinary notions about slaying all the soldiers in the barracks, and massacreing all the Saxons in the island, so that every true Irishman should "have wheaten bread next year:" but they could not assist in the first step—forming a plan for obtaining Repeal.

Spectator, 1843, p. 965.

Arrests of Repeal Leaders.

Annual Register, 1843, p. 237.

For a few days, Dublin was full of rumours of the arrest of O'Connell, though his portly form was daily seen in the streets. On the 14th, the rumour

1841—46. was true. He, his son, and eight of their coadjutors, were arrested on charges of conspiracy, sedition, and unlawful assembling. They were admitted to bail. This was the turning point of O'Connell's life. It was at once observed that his anxiety for the public peace was extreme. His language became moderate; or, whenever it swelled into vehemence, it was from an evident agony of apprehension lest the multitude whom he had inflamed should break out into the violence which he had before indicated to them. Those who should know best have since declared that from this time his health began to fail; and that the word "prison" caused him an anguish which he could not conceal. He issued the most imploring and incessant entreaties to the people to keep perfectly quiet; and declared that he would never again use the term "Saxon," as he found that it gave offence. He caught at an offer from Mr. Joseph Sturge, of Birmingham, to aid the Repeal cause, if he would confine his demand to a local legislature for merely local purposes, and would unite the British demand for universal suffrage with his own objects.

Annual Register, 1843, p. 238.

The Trials.

The proceedings began on the 2nd of November, in the Court of Queen's Bench in Dublin. From the first hour, it was evident that obstruction and delay were the policy of the accused. It was not till the 8th that the jury found the indictment "a true bill:" and the trial was by various devices put off till the 15th of January. An unfortunate and disgraceful error occurred in the preparation of the jury lists, two slips of the lists having been lost, and 63 names thus dropped by the way. There was much controversy as to whether this accident would prove fatal to the prosecutions; and there were disputes and delays about the exclusion of certain Catholics from the jury, and about every point that could be raised. If it was difficult to conduct jury-trial in Ireland in all party cases, it might be anticipated that it would be almost impossible in this critical instance, where it was difficult in the extreme to secure a fair jury. The practice of smuggling a jury on the one hand and packing it on the other was familiar to every man's expectation: and few or none believed it possible to find, in all Dublin, twelve dispassionate and impartial men on a question in which Repeal was concerned. The community was sharply divided between those who adored, and those who hated, O'Connell. On the important 15th of January, when O'Connell and his son arrived at the Four Courts, conducted by the Lord Mayor in his state carriage, and escorted by twenty-three other carriages, the jurors drew back on various pleas—ill-health—mistakes in the setting down of their Christian names—and other excuses. All but one paid the fine of 50*l.*; and he was excused on presenting an affidavit of ill-health. One rheumatic old gentleman of 72 was compelled to serve; and it was noticed that great efforts were made by the lawyers of the accused to keep on as many invalids as possible, evidently in the hope that some attack of illness might frustrate the trial.—Then, two of the accused were absent; and the excuse presented for one of them was, that he lived four miles from town. When the Court had waited long enough, and was about to forfeit his recognizances, he appeared, and every body laughed.

Annual Register, 1843, p. 240.

1844.

There were few to laugh, however, when the Irish Attorney-General made his statement. Though every body had read about the Repeal movement in the newspapers, for months past, every body seemed now struck by the story as if it was new. It was a fearful story; and it left the impression on all 1841—46. minds that a rebellion like that of 1798 was impending. Those who did laugh as the trial proceeded were moved to it by the extraordinary character of the scene—the impudence, the recklessness, the buffoonery, which can hardly be conceived of by those who are accustomed to the gravity of an English Court of Justice. The case for the prosecution occupied eleven days; and after that, the aim of the accused, to wear out the jury, became even more evident than before.—At length, on the twenty-fourth day, which was Saturday, February 10th, there was every expectation that the verdict of the jury would be delivered before night. At seven o'clock, the Chief Justice closed his charge, which produced a startling effect in Court, from the grouping together of O'Connell's speeches of incitement, and of the threatenings of the Repeal newspapers. The jury inquired whether it was necessary for them to proceed that night: they were extremely fatigued. They were not let off; and at half-past seven they retired. A little before eleven, they returned a verdict imperfect in form, and were sent back. At a quarter past twelve, they were called in, and informed that they must be locked up till Monday.

When the imperfect verdict was proffered, a vast crowd was assembled outside the Courts; and the news that the accused were all found more or less guilty was received with a terrific yell, which must have told on the nerves of some of the worn-out jurymen. A woman had that day entered the shop of one of them, and offered to sell his wife a widow's cap, saying that it would be needed, if the verdict was against O'Connell. Between one and two o'clock in the morning, a company paraded the streets, apparently with a view to create a disturbance: but Dublin was full of soldiery, and all was kept quiet. A crowd gathered on Sunday morning, to see the jury go to church; but it was thought more prudent to have divine service performed for them in their retreat. At nine o'clock on Monday morning, the Court assembled. Mr. O'Connell was attended by a gentleman whose accession to the Repeal cause was at that time hailed as one of its chief triumphs. Mr. W. S. O'Brien. William Smith O'Brien was a gentleman of ancient family, high respectability of character, amiable temper, and sufficient ability to have made a considerable impression in the House of Commons (where he sat as Member for Limerick), by his speeches on the subject of Ireland; and especially by one, eminently rational and moderate, in the preceding session. It is no wonder that when he chose the moment of O'Connell's danger, and that of the cause, for joining it—before his fatal faults of mind and temper had been brought out by circumstances—his junction with the Repealers was hailed by them with enthusiasm, and regarded by their opponents with feelings of apprehension which are now looked back upon with a melancholy smile. As he entered the Court with the accused, this critical morning, no doubt his heart glowed with generous emotions, and he believed he was serving Ireland. None but those who knew him best could have believed, if it had been foretold to them, how his vanity would henceforth swell to bursting, and his small powers of judgment collapse, till he should close the new course on which he was now entering by plunging his poor countrymen into the miseries of abortive rebellion, and subjecting himself to the punishment of the felon, rendered more bitter by his own keen sense of what he must call the ingratitude of Irishmen. He now sat by O'Connell's side when, at ten o'clock, the jury entered with their verdict.

Annual Register, 1844. Trials, 335. The Verdict.

There were eleven counts in the indictment; and O'Connell was found Guilty on them all; and, with the exception of some clauses here and there, so were all the accused, except the Rev. Mr. Tierney, the priest, who escaped lightly. O'Connell immediately issued an address to the people of Ireland, in which he assured them that the event of his conviction would prove wholly favourable to the Repeal cause, and concluded with the words, "Keep the peace for six months, or at the most twelve months longer, and you shall have the parliament in College Green again." Scarcely credible as it appears, it is true that multitudes even yet believed the promise.—The news of O'Connell's conviction flew, like the winds, over all Ireland; and in Tipperary, the winter night was lighted up with signal fires on the hills.

Spectator, 1844, p. 154.

Annual Register, 1844. Trials, 337. The Sentence.

It was the 30th of May before sentence was pronounced. Mr. Tierney escaped altogether. O'Connell was sentenced to a year's imprisonment, and a fine of £2000, and was bound in high recognizances to keep the peace for seven years. The others were sentenced, each to nine months' imprisonment, a fine of £50, and to find high security for future peaceable conduct.—The lenity of this sentence probably took every body by surprise. No one could say there was any vindictiveness in it; and merely as discipline, it was gentle. The best part of it—the binding over to keep the peace for seven years—the part which could not be openly complained of, was the most irksome: but no one could dispute its being necessary, if the proceedings were in any sense justifiable. The judge, Burton, who pronounced sentence, was so much affected as to be scarcely able to do his duty. Mr. O'Connell briefly protested that he was guiltless of conspiracy, and that justice had not been done. He was allowed to choose his place of imprisonment; and he chose the Richmond Penitentiary, in Dublin: and there he was conveyed. Proceedings were taken for a reversal of the sentence, and the writ of error immediately transmitted to London. In the prison, Mr. O'Connell was permitted to receive his friends; but their names were not allowed to be written down for publication; nor were deputations admitted to address the Liberator. Mr. Smith O'Brien exerted himself to get this restriction removed; but the matter rested with the Board of Superintendents of the prison; and they did not yield; so the long trains of carriages rolled away from the gates as they came. The number of visitors was so great as to be fatiguing to the prisoner; but it was observed that his health improved from week to week; and it was clear that his mind was relieved in his present inaction, under his temporary release from the fearful responsibility which he had taken upon himself, and which had latterly been too much for him. These were his last days of repose and peace of mind.

Appeal to the Lords.

On the 12th of July, Lord Heytesbury was gazetted as Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland; Lord De Grey's feeble health incapacitating him for an office so arduous. When the new Viceroy landed, and was presented with the keys of the city, it was observed that the ribbons were not, as hitherto, of party-colours, but "sky-blue and white—emblems of peace, harmony, and love," as a local paper interpreted them. The preceding Sunday was the day appointed for putting up a prayer for O'Connell in all the Catholic chapels: but there was an ominous difference among the priestly authorities about it. The Catholic Archbishop of Dublin interdicted the act, and was only partially obeyed. Meantime, the appeal of the prisoners was before the Lords. By the Lords its points were referred to the twelve judges for their opinion. All the judges pronounced six of the eleven counts to be bad or informal, chiefly through the splitting of the charges by the jury in their verdict, in their anxious desire to be precise and accurate. They had, in fact, set up distinctions in the kinds of conspiracy which were not distinguished in the indictment. These six counts were declared unexceptionable by the Irish judges, and untenable by the English: a result which would scarcely improve the popular estimate of the administration of law in Ireland. Seven of the judges next opined that the judgment and sentence must stand, notwithstanding, as the Irish judges must know best upon how much of the verdict they grounded their judgment: and there was enough that was sound to justify the sentence. Two English judges dissented from this view: and the Peers were now to decide between the opinions of the seven and the minority. Every body seems to have taken for granted that the House of Lords would avail itself of every opportunity to confirm the sentence, and keep the Agitator laid up. The Repealers protested that they did not care; and such friends as they had in London began to despise the Lords beforehand for their anticipated judgment.—On the 6th of September, immediately before the prorogation of parliament, the Law Lords delivered their opinions. Some of the Peers, seeing the decision likely to go in favour of O'Connell, were eager to vote, instead of leaving the matter, as was just and decorous in an intricate question of legality, to the Law Lords: but Lord Wharncliffe interposed to support the dignity of the House as a Court of Appeal, and induced the lay Lords to retire without voting. The Earl of Verulam was the first who retired behind the Woolsack; and all the lay Lords present followed. Four Peers remained. Lord Denman, Lord Cottenham, and Lord Campbell, voted that the judgment of the Court below should be reversed. Lord Brougham voted the other way.

Spectator, 1841, p. 841.

Ibid. p. 845.

Judgment reversed.

The news of the reversal of the judgment, and the victory of O'Connell, was received by multitudes in England with a sort of consternation. But the most calm and clear-minded saw the matter at once as all learned by experience to regard it. It was not only that they kept in view the supreme importance of an impartial administration of the law. That would have been enough: but they also saw that this decision deprived O'Connell of his great theme—the injustice and oppression of "the Saxon," and the enslavement of the Irish under the Imperial connexion. It was by the Imperial parliament that his appeal was justified, and his sentence dissolved: and it was the hand of benign justice herself that now heaped coals of fire on his head. Time confirmed this view. It was his release that broke the already anxious spirit of the Agitator. If a shadow of doubt had rested on the strict legal justice of his punishment, he would have come out from his prison at the year's end, strongly armed in injury, to lay waste the country under a new term of agitation. As it was, he came out—however boastful and clamorous—in reality perplexed, anxious, and feeble. He never was like himself again, except on some single occasions. He was, and he felt himself, half-way down a precipice, uncertain

Effect on O'Connell.

1841—46. whether to go up or down—unable to do either. His career was now virtually over.

Yet there was an external grandeur about his release. On the notification of his freedom being given him, he left the prison on foot, with his sons and a few friends. He was recognised in the street, and escorted home by a crowd, whom he dismissed with a short speech from his balcony. The next morning early he went back to his prison, to be carried home in triumph. The whole city was abroad to see; and it was two hours from the time when the procession began to leave the gates, before the car could be brought up. The car—often used before, and now recognised with transport by the people—lifted him a dozen feet over the heads of the crowd. He stood at his full height, and was crowned with the Repeal cap. He was portly, and apparently in good health; but his countenance wore the anxious expression which was now becoming habitual to it. As for the rest, the show was vulgar enough;—the grandsons of the Agitator being on the lower platform of the car, in "green velvet tunics, and caps with white feathers." The best feature was perhaps the coach in which were the lawyers in the cause, carrying the "Monster Indictment." Mr. O'Connell closed the proceedings by an address from his balcony, in which he "hoped it would not be necessary to hold the Clontarf meeting," the principle of which was vindicated by the trials. He promised to open out his further plans at the Repeal Hall—whimsically called Conciliation Hall—on the next Monday.—At that meeting, which was crowded and triumphant, Mr. W. Smith O'Brien "rushed to the front of the platform, seized the Liberator's hand, and shook it vigorously for some moments." In return, Smith O'Brien's hand was pressed to the heart of the Liberator; and the cheering and stamping were such that "the very building quaked and trembled." How soon was all this to appear a mockery! These fervent friends were soon to stand before the world as enemies—O'Brien striving to be a rival sun in the same hemisphere—O'Connell heaping contempt and foul names on O'Brien! O'Connell kept his promise of announcing "plans" at Conciliation Hall. From this time, he was more fertile in "plans" than ever: he was incessantly changing them. His language grew, if possible, bigger, his demonstrations more vulgar—with more green velvet, feathers, harps, wreaths, and old Irish costumes—and his Monster Meetings more enormous. He was invited to England, and fêted there, and made use of for the Anti-Corn-Law cause. But he was never really formidable again, and he knew it. He had no policy—no principle—nothing to repose upon; and only his ingenuity and audacity for a resource. A severe blow was struck at him towards the close of 1845—and his extreme violence showed how it told upon his heart—by an exposure of his deficiencies as a landlord. It became known—not by any hostile gossip, but by means of a full and authorized investigation into the facts—that this Liberator, whose heart was wrung by the woes of Ireland, whose life was devoted to her redemption, was a Middleman, pocketing three times as much rent drawn from a squalid peasantry, as he paid to the head landlord; while also his own tenantry were in "a lost, wretched, and neglected condition." While holding forth patriotically against oppression, hundreds of miles from home, and

Annual Register, 1844, Chron. 95.

Demonstrations.

O'Connell as a Landlord.

Letters of the 'Times' Commissioner, p. 530.

O'Connell's Decline.

His Death. Letters from Genoa, May 16th, 1847.

drawing away the peasantry from honest industry to hear his vapourings about freedom and prosperity, and pay their only shilling in an imaginary cause, he was receiving rent from squalid wretches who wallowed with the pig, and were chilled under his roofs by the wintry wind, and would fain have shared the food of his beagles. He was furious at this exposure; but his hard words mattered little while hard facts were against him.—Then he was seen in London streets, walking slowly and stooping, while supported by two of his sons; and members of the House complained that they could not hear his now short speeches, because of the feebleness of his voice.—Then rumours arose of approaching famine in Ireland, and his sinking heart could not bear them. He was disturbed at the rise of the "Young Ireland" party—the new section of Repealers and Liberators who were impatient for war, while he no longer talked of battle fields, but grew more timid and perplexed from day to day. When the Whigs succeeded to the Peel government in 1846, and he was reinstated in the Commission of the Peace, and supported the Russell ministry, he was harassed and shaken by the scorn and enmity of "Young Ireland," who taunted him with having "surrendered." As the famine was seen surely to approach, all political action became out of the question. His physicians said he must be removed from the sight and hearing of whatever would disturb him: and, if the later portraits of him are to be trusted, this was highly necessary. It is affecting to look on the heavy eye, and the mournful and wistful expression of countenance. He went to Hastings; and he did not mend, though the newspapers had paragraphs about his improving health, or health which needed no improvement. He desired that the newspapers might be kept from him, and all tidings of Ireland. No one was to be admitted who would speak of Ireland. He so watched the countenance of his physician when looking at his tongue, and was so alarmed by any gravity of countenance at the moment, that his physician had to remember to look cheerful and pleased. Next, he went abroad, hoping to reach Rome, and die under the blessing of the Pope. But he sank too rapidly for this. He was carried to Paris, Marseilles, Genoa; and then he could go no further. The final symptoms consequent on a long decay of the digestive functions came on, in May, 1847: and on the 15th of that month, he died, his latest anxieties being lest he should be buried alive. He gave repeated warnings to his physicians and servant against this danger. His melancholy deepened to the last; and his only interest seemed to be in dependence on his confessor, and in repeating the prayers enjoined. On examination, the state of the brain explained his later moods. It was extensively diseased; and the disease, both there and elsewhere, must have been of long standing. This was a natural close of the life he had led—a life of strong passions, and intense and unremitted excitement, without the repose of a simple integrity: but it is not the less profoundly melancholy. Those who could least pretend to lament his disappearance from his mischievous position in Ireland, could not see without emotion the progress of the old triumphal car through the streets of Dublin, bearing the silent remains of him whom multitudes still called by the name of Liberator. The name has died already, and will be henceforth met with only in the chronicles of a past time. It is difficult now to find an educated Irishman who speaks of O'Connell with respect, or who denies that he set back Ireland half a century by his political action after 1829. But his

1841—46. name was a spell upon the Catholic peasantry; and when the charm was dissolved, and the idol broken, there was no heart that was not aware of the melancholy which always attends the breaking of idols.

During the years when the Repeal agitation was strongest, there were things doing in and for Ireland which afforded some hope on her behalf, even to those who saw most clearly the mischiefs of O'Connell's course, and were most indignant at them. The most essential good that could be rendered to Ireland—that which at least must precede every other—was an exposure of the fact that her miseries proceeded from moral and social, and not political causes. The famine was coming which was to do this good work in a harsh manner. While the famine was not foreseen, there was something extremely disheartening in O'Connell's pernicious mode of action, and in the rise of Young Ireland, with its political ignorance, its slaughter-house talk, and its bullying boasts—all so vulgar in the presence of the mournful greatness of the cause it professed to monopolize. But violence and ignorance and folly are, in their own nature, short-lived; and there was a lasting life in some institutions and methods and proposals on behalf of Ireland which were not extinguished by the Repeal agitation.

Improving Agriculture.

The county of Derry was showing, according to its wont, what could be done by the application of industry and capital, among a mixed population of Catholics and Protestants, and under the much-abused Union. On the estates of the London Companies, were seen "good farm-houses, large squared fields, good fences, and abundant crops," at the same date when, under an invited visitation, an inquirer was compelled to report, "in no part of the United Kingdom is such neglected wretchedness—such filth, such squalor, such misery of every kind—to be seen, as I saw that day on Mr. O'Connell's estate, in the presence of Mr. Maurice O'Connell." At the same date, Dr. Kane was asking whence such contrasts arise; and avowing "the fault is not in the country, but in ourselves:" and he adds, "we do not want activity; we are not deficient in mental power, but we want special industrial knowledge." This want was considered and met in the introduction of Agricultural Schools, whose benefits would be spreading over the land when the Union was no more talked of than it is in Scotland now. From the Templemoyle Seminary, for one, young men were going forth every year, to reclaim or improve the land about their homes, and command good labour, and train to good habits, and produce conspicuous crops, and occupy the minds of the peasantry round them with something better than showy processions, and visions of battle fields that would never be fought. It was already apparent that where these young men settled down, the quality of labour and of produce improved, the peasantry were better fed and lodged, and crime so diminished as that the police and soldiery went almost out of sight.—Then there were Agricultural Associations which kept up the interest of the gentry, though they never sufficiently engaged the attention of the farmers. There was also the Irish Waste Land Improvement Society, which did more good to the peasantry, by compelling patient improvement of the soil, and patient learning how to improve it.

Letters of 'Times' Commissioner, p. 151.

Letters of 'Times' Commissioner, p. 529.

Industrial Resources of Ireland, p. 412.

Agricultural Schools.

Agricultural Associations.

Charitable Bequests Act.

An important measure—a measure calculated to heal religious dissensions, and redress Catholic grievances—passed the legislature in the session of 1844—a measure for the better security and administration of Charitable and Religious Trusts. It was introduced in the Lords, where it met with no obstruction. In the Commons, it was disputed, chiefly by the hot-headed Irish repeal members, who talked as usual of "insult" and "injustice" to Ireland; while their calmer comrades, and every body else, saw that it was conceived and framed in a just and kind spirit, and must work benignly. At the beginning of the century, a Board was appointed to administer Charitable Trusts; and the members were almost exclusively Protestants, while nearly three-fourths of the bequests placed under its jurisdiction were Roman Catholic endowments. By the new Bill, three members of the Board were to be dignitaries of the law, two of whom might be Catholics: and ten more Commissioners were to be appointed by the Crown, five of whom were to be Protestants, and five Catholics. Various imperfections of the existing law were so redressed as to give a preponderance at the Board to the Catholic section where Catholic bequests were concerned. Mr. O'Connell injured himself much with the most enlightened part of his Catholic countrymen by his opposition to this Bill, an opposition which he grounded on his fears of the consequences of sending Catholics to the Castle, and of sanctioning a connexion of the Catholic Church with the State. On occasion of the third reading, Mr. Maurice J. O'Connell said, that "he was bound to express his conviction that when the present heats had subsided, the Bill would be found a substantial benefit to the people of Ireland, raising the condition of their clergymen, without shackling the influence exercised by them over their flocks." In August, Mr. O'Connell declared that all befitting means should be taken to prevent the Act going into execution, and intimated that it could never take effect if Roman Catholics refused the office of Commissioners; yet, on the 21st of November, the Dublin Evening Freeman announced "the first blow at the independence of the Catholic Church;" the rumour that Catholic Prelates and laymen of respectability had consented to become Commissioners. It was even so. The Catholic Primate of Ireland, the Catholic Archbishop of Dublin, and three more Catholics "of respectability," were gazetted as Commissioners in December, together with four prelates and laymen of the Established Church, and one Presbyterian divine. The success of this healing measure, which brought the heads of the two churches together to watch over the interests of religion and charity, was a sore addition to Mr. O'Connell's perplexities, and a severe blow to his influence, by forcing him into collision with the chief priests of his own communion.

Hansard, lxxvi. 1512.

Spectator, 1844, p. 1157.

Hansard, lxxvi. 1780.

Spectator, 1844, p. 820, 1112.

Dublin Gazette, December 18th, 1844.

PENAL ACTS REPEAL.

During the same session, the Lord Chancellor united with a Catholic Peer, Lord Beaumont, in obtaining the abolition of various penal Acts against the Romanists, which, though obsolete, were an offence as they stood in the statute book. The abolition of the office of Lord Lieutenant was proposed, as a means of bringing Ireland into the same close union as exists between England and Scotland. Mr. Hume had striven for this object twenty years before, and he was as fully convinced as ever that the assignment of a viceregal government to Ireland gave that country a colonial appearance which was highly disadvantageous. The frequent changes of administration in Dublin were a serious drawback upon good government. Instead of a responsible minister of the Crown residing in London, there had been sixteen Chief Secre-

Hansard, lxxvi. 1171.

Hansard, lxxiv. 834.

VICEROYALTY DISCUSSED.

1841—46. taries for Ireland in the first thirty years after the Union. A smaller consideration, but not an unimportant one, was the economy of the change. Mr. Hume moved an address to the Queen, requesting her to consider of the abolition of the Viceroyalty. The answer of Lord Eliot, the Irish Secretary, was that the change would be inconvenient; that the Irish people did not desire it; and that the office was six hundred years old, whereas none such had existed in Scotland. Lord John Russell, upon this, pointed out that it had been in contemplation to appoint a separate Council for Scotland; but that Lord Somers had maintained that such a Council would prevent the Union from ever being complete. There was opposition enough to induce Mr. Hume to withdraw his motion. His object will probably be carried out in an easy and natural manner—by such improvements in science and the arts as are already bridging the narrow sea, and bringing London and Dublin within easy hail of each other. When the English, from the Queen to the commercial traveller, can visit Ireland as easily as Scotland, and London news can be heard as soon in Dublin as in Edinburgh, and a Secretary of State in London can govern and protect the one as well as the other, it is pretty certain that the whole apparatus of the Viceroyalty, about which the affections of the Catholic Irish certainly do not cling, will be swept away; and there will be one reminder the less of the tenure of conquest under which this special machinery of government was set down in the midst of the Irish people.

Hansard, lxxiv. 850.

Endowment of Catholic Clergy.

The subject of endowing the Roman Catholic clergy was much discussed throughout the country at this time. Loud and vehement declarations were uttered by the Irish political leaders in the name of the priests, and by many of the priests themselves, that nothing would ever induce them to accept of a shilling of endowment from Protestant hands: but numbers of thoughtful men believed then, as numbers of thoughtful men believe at this day, that, with time and patience, such a scheme would work. The Protestant Church in Ireland is felt to be an intolerable grievance, in its existing preponderance. All attempts to reduce it to its fair proportions, and settle it in its true function, have failed: and the easiest way now seems to be to raise the depressed Church of the majority into a greater fitness for its function. As a Missionary Church, the Establishment has failed, and will evidently continue to fail. If the Catholic majority of the Irish people do not, and will not, enter it, the way which remains to enlighten and improve them is to elevate and improve the quality of their priesthood; a priesthood hitherto kept ignorant and dependent by the meagreness of their means of education, and by their absolute dependence on their flocks for subsistence. If a provision were once made for them by law, and the arrangement placed beyond dispute—if an annual sum for every priest were known to be lying at the banker's—it was the belief of the advocates of the endowment that the priests would take it; and there could be nothing in receiving a provision thus which could subject the recipients to any dangers of dependence comparable to those amidst which they were actually living. The example of foreign countries showed that there is no abstract objection in the minds of a Catholic priesthood to endowment by a Protestant State. The difficulty in the Irish case was purely political; and therefore likely to give way under a liberal and kindly political management.

1845.
Maynooth Grant

The proposal of an increased grant to Maynooth College was regarded by many as a first step towards the object, though it might perfectly well stand by itself, as having important merits of its own. It was a great thing to provide for the improved education of the priesthood, whether or not this advantage was to be followed up by making them less dependent for subsistence on their peasant flocks. It was a great thing to raise them by education above the wish for vulgar and dangerous power over the people, whether or not the sordid part of the temptation was to be afterwards obviated. Sir R. Peel had the courage to propose, on the 3rd of April, 1845, that the parliamentary grant to Maynooth College should be enlarged so as, in some degree, to bear out the purpose of making any grant at all. The institution had always been most meagrely supplied with comforts, and even with the necessaries of life; the professors were paid less than counting-house clerks; and at present the distress of the times had materially reduced the contributions of the middle classes, who paid for the education of their sons. It would be better to withdraw all pretence of government support than to let the College go on in this way: and it was a question how money could be better spent than in really educating the students who were to be (whether well or ill-qualified) the future guides and guardians of the Catholic population of Ireland. It seems as if no great courage could be required to propose such an augmentation of the annual grant to Maynooth as to make it worth while to award any grant at all. But it did require great courage; and there was scarcely any act of his bold administration for which the Premier was more vituperated than for this. It was the great political controversy of the year—the subject on which society seemed to be going mad. It was not the extent of the grant that was deprecated; but the advance in that direction at all. Hitherto, the grant had been 9,000*l.*; and the trustees had been authorized to hold land to the amount of 1,000*l.* per annum: but this could never be done, because the trustees were never incorporated. They were now to be incorporated, and permitted to hold land to the amount of 3000*l.* per annum. The sum of 6000*l.* was to be granted for professors' salaries, which would henceforth be large enough to yield comfort and respectability, and therefore to secure a higher order of qualification than could hitherto be commanded. At present, the number of students was 440. It was proposed to make adequate allowances to 500 students. The annual grant would thus be raised from 9,000*l.* to 26,360*l.* As it would be necessary to enlarge the College, and it was most desirable to render it more comfortable and cheerful than at present, the sum of 30,000*l.* was asked for, as a special grant—the needful repairs being henceforth provided for by an annual vote.—There was nothing in this that ought to have alarmed a people and parliament accustomed to make an annual grant to Maynooth. It seems a matter of mere prudence to provide thus far for the decent education and bare comfort of a body of 500 priests who were certain to have more influence over the Irish people than all other persons together. Yet the public consternation was excessive. The Dissenters pushed an opposition almost as loud and formidable as on the Factory Education clauses. Public meetings to remonstrate against the measure were held over the whole kingdom—a violent one at the London Tavern leading the way. Upwards of 100 of the mer-

Hansard, lxxix 33—36.

chants, bankers, and traders of London signed the requisition for this meeting. The first resolution declared the proposed grant to be a renunciation of the Protestantism under which the empire had flourished: and the mover took upon him to declare that the grant was "directly opposed to the revealed will of the Creator." The Dublin Protestant Operative Association demanded the impeachment of the Prime Minister. Some members of parliament were called on by their constituents to resign their seats: and the table of the House groaned under the mass of petitions against the measure. The truth was, this measure was an express discountenancing of the "Protestant ascendancy" in Ireland; while in England it at once provoked the fears of the vast body of Dissenters about the spread of the Romish faith, and their jealousy about government endowments of religion. Not a few advocates of the measure were heard to say that it was now becoming necessary to endow all ministers of every faith and denomination. The external agitation was reflected within the walls of parliament in a debate of three nights in the Lords, and six in the Commons, on the second reading of the Bill. It passed, however, on the 16th of June, amidst protests from five Bishops and three lay Peers, who objected to it on the grounds that it provided for the maintenance of religious error, and for opposition to the Reformation; and that it countenanced the notion that religious truth was a matter of indifference to the State.

Daily Papers, April 15th, 1845.

Hansard, lxxxi. 594.

New Colleges.

A more important measure tending to the great object of abating religious rancour in Ireland met with resistance from an opposite quarter. In the Royal Speech at the opening of the session, the Sovereign recommended to the best consideration of parliament "the policy of improving and extending the opportunities for academical education in Ireland." The Ministers were prepared with their plan, which was brought forward by Sir James Graham, on the 9th of May. The National Education system in Ireland was working well; but its host of 400,000 pupils included only children, and, as yet, children of the poorer classes, though it was extending upwards. It was desirable to enable those who had sat side by side on the school-benches, as yet untouched by the religious bigotry which was the curse of the country, to continue the education which had begun so favourably; and also to provide for the same harmony being extended to all classes of society. The government therefore proposed the establishment of three Colleges, in the north, west, and south of Ireland, in which a liberal and comprehensive academical education should be opened to young men of every religious denomination, without distinction. There could, of course, be no theological professorships founded by the government: but every facility was afforded for the voluntary establishment of such, in connexion with the colleges. As for the question whether these new colleges should be incorporated into a new University, or whether Trinity College, Dublin, should, without invasion of her present Protestant rights, be enabled to admit the new colleges into incorporation with her as an University—this was for parliament to decide upon. After much debate, earnest but less violent than that on the Maynooth question, the measure was carried, by a vote of 177 to 26 in the Commons, and without a division in the Lords—the question of the University arrangements being

Hansard, lxxvii. 4.

Hansard, lxxx. 345–366.

Hansard, lxxxii. 379, 1025.

left over till the views of the governing powers of all the colleges could be obtained. The bigots among the Catholic clergy were the foes in this case. The cry about "godless" education was loud and has been long.

The new institutions have ever since gone by the name of the "godless" colleges among the fanatics of the Romish faith, and some few of the Protestant church: and, by much painstaking, and prodigious misrepresentation, the less enlightened of the Catholic priesthood at length obtained from the conscientious but weak Pope, Pius IX., a rescript against these colleges, as places of education of the Catholic youth of Ireland. The measure was, and is, however, all-important as throwing the *onus* of religious exclusiveness on the Catholic portion of society in Ireland; and as a distinct pledge that the Imperial government was at last exercising an impartial sway over its subjects of differing faiths. The sum proposed for the erection of the three colleges was £100,000; for their maintenance—that is, the salaries of officers, and the prizes for the encouragement of learning—£18,000 per annum. In each college there was to be a Principal, with a salary of £1000, and ten or twelve Professors, with salaries of £300 a year. Residences were not provided; but the Principal of each college would live within the walls; and the modes of residence of the students were to be under safe regulation, under the Act. The power of appointment and removal of the professors was to rest with the Crown, as was obviously fitting in a case which involved party feelings to so great an extent. The preparations for these new institutions were immediately begun. It must be left for time to show how they work.

Annual Register, 1845: Pub. Doc. p. 455.

THE DEVON COMMISSION

In February of this year, a Report was presented by the Commissioners of Inquiry, sent out in 1843, to investigate the law and practice in respect to the occupation of land in Ireland. Much expectation was excited by the appointment of the Devon Commission (as it was called, from the Earl of Devon being at the head of it): and the expectation was kept up by the eagerness of multitudes of persons connected with the proprietorship and occupation of land in Ireland, to give evidence before the Commission. They came in crowds to tell what they knew, and thought, and felt; and it was hoped that now, at last, light would be obtained as to what was to be hoped and feared, and what could be done. The information obtained was extensive and valuable: and large practical use might soon have been made of it, in the form of proposed legislation, but that the famine was approaching, which put aside all considerations but how to prevent the whole rural population from dying of hunger. Though the time has not arrived for making use of the disclosures of this Report, and though much of it may be actually superseded by the operations of calamity, it remains a token of solicitude for the regeneration of Ireland on the part of the Ministers in office during its preparation.

1846.

COERCION BILL. Hansard, lxxxiii. 1363.

During the decline of Mr. O'Connell's power, and the rising conflict between his Repeal party and that which was to be headed by Mr. W. Smith O'Brien, while want was becoming aggravated, and famine was approaching, the amount of outrage in Ireland increased so grievously, that Ministers introduced a Coercion Bill early in the session of 1846. The Bill was framed strictly for the protection of quiet members of society—permitting the Viceroy to award compensation to the maimed, and to the families of the murdered, under the attacks at which the measure was aimed. Under it, disturbed districts might be proclaimed, and night-meetings within them prevented. The Bill passed the Lords easily, but was vehemently disputed, and at last lost, in the Commons, where party feeling ran high amidst the final agitation about the Corn laws, and the hopes and fears about the going out of the Peel ministry. It was generally understood that the defeat of Ministers on this Coercion Bill—so mild of its class—was occasioned by a combination of parties; and the speeches of Lord G. Bentinck and Mr. d'Israeli, universally reprobated for their spirit, were regarded as manifestations of the real reasons of the result. At the moment when the Corn-law Repeal Bill was passing the Lords, the second reading of the government Bill for Ireland was refused by a majority of 292 to 219, after a delay of five months, which would have been seriously injurious to the operation of the Bill, if it had passed. The division took place on the 26th of June—three days before the announcement of the retirement of the Peel administration;—a retirement which might have been rendered necessary by the failure of this measure, if it had not been, as was well known, determined beforehand, as a natural consequence of the carrying of the measure for which Sir R. Peel had returned to power—the repeal of the Corn laws.

Hansard, lxxxvii. 1027.

Bill Lost.

Threatenings of Famine.

We must look further back for the deciding cause of the retirement of the Peel administration. Before the end of 1845, it was clear that the potato-crop in Ireland was likely to be utterly destroyed by blight. Men whose vision was bounded by political party spirit endeavoured to persuade others as well as themselves, that the avowed alarm of the Cabinet for the food of half a nation was little more than a device to get the Corn laws repealed with the least possible difficulty; but men of more enlightenment and a more simple conscience had faith in the earnestness of the Minister, in the reality of his solemnity, in the sincerity of the solicitude which marked his countenance and his voice, and in the truth of the abundant evidence which he laid before parliament of the probable extent of the approaching calamity. It was all too true. The work of preparation for a new age for Ireland was taken out of human hands; and a terrible clearance of the field of Irish soil and society was about to be made for the efforts of future apostles, and the wisdom of future legislators. The virtues of two parties of rulers were not, however, to be in vain. Under them the great truth had appeared that the causes of Irish misery were not political, but social; and both had done what they could to purge out the spirit of religious and political rancour which had hitherto poisoned every public benefit, and aggravated every social woe, of that unhappy country.

CHAPTER IX.

1839—43.

CHURCH PATRONAGE IN SCOTLAND.

THE Ecclesiastical disturbances, whose beginnings have been noticed, were by this time becoming of the gravest import. Scotland was affording as complete an exemplification as the world has seen of the perplexities attendant on an alliance between the Church and the State. At the date before us, events were occurring which tested the merits of a scheme concocted by Harley, Bolingbroke, and Swift, in the palace of Queen Anne. By an Act of 1711, the power of free choice, the *liberum arbitrium*, as to the appointment of pastors in the Scotch Church, was taken from the Church Courts, by subjecting the power of the Presbytery to the interpretation, and even control, of the Civil Courts. The minority of the General Assembly of that time approved of the Act, which fulfilled their idea of the connexion of Church and State. The majority protested against it, from year to year; but the protest, being of no avail, at length became little more than a form. The leading men of the time, the philosophers and men of letters, who represented Scotland to English eyes, were not earnest Churchmen—not earnest about religion at all; and the arrangement of 1711 suited their views very well, as being moderate, decorous, and tending to peace. They did not see what was going on, wherever a pastor whom the flock did not like was forced upon them. In a multitude of parishes, the patron nominated the minister: if the Presbytery found him unexceptionable in "life, literature, and doctrine," they were then obliged to appoint him, however unacceptable he might be to the flock. There were many ways in which a minister, with whose "life, literature, and doctrine," no fault could be found, might be unfit for the care of a particular parish. He might have a weak voice, or too much scholarship for a rustic congregation, or he might have town ways and ideas, or he might not speak Gaelic where the people understood little English. In such cases, the people would turn to the Voluntaries, and become dissenters. We have before seen how dissent abounded in Scotland at the period of the Melbourne ministry, and how virulently the high-churchmen of the Kirk regarded the Voluntaries who claimed to be, and were, considerably more than half the nation. In 1834, an effort had been made to recover the power which had been taken from the Church by the Act of 1711: and apparently it succeeded. But the power of the State was not to be cast out from the Church so easily as at first appeared; and the Church found itself compelled to advance, or assert new claims. In the quarrel about these, the Establishment was rent in twain, and the Church of Scotland became a warning and a sign of the fate of all churches which have made the effort to maintain at once an alliance with the State and the principles of the Reformation.

1834.

Gordon's Memorial, &c., 1841, p. 4.

PATRONAGE THE CAUSE OF DISSENT.

The progress of dissent was so rapid after 1820 that the earnest members of the Kirk took it much to heart. Wherever they turned, in hope of bringing back the Voluntaries to the Church, they were met by the objection that the people preferred choosing their own pastors to having them nominated, in a compulsory way, by a lay patron, who might or might not, according to his temper, listen to any objections on the part of his flock to his nominee. The earnest Churchmen saw that this lay-patronage must be got rid of; and petitions for its abolition so poured in upon parliament, that a Select Committee of the Commons was appointed in 1834 to consider the subject. The same agitation wrought in another direction—giving a large majority of Non-intrusion members to the General Assembly, in which they had hitherto been the minority. While the Committee of the Commons was sitting, the General Assembly passed an enactment, containing a Declaration and a Rule. The Declaration was that it was a "fundamental law" of the Church that no pastor should be intruded on any congregation, contrary to the will of the people: and a Rule was prescribed, by which the will of the people might be ascertained and manifested. A Veto on the nomination was afforded to them. This is the celebrated Veto Act. Those who passed it professed to believe it to be perfectly compatible with the Act of 1711: it was also declared to be so by the law-officers of the Crown, and emphatically praised by the Lord Chancellor, who pronounced it to be "in every respect more desirable than any other course that could have been taken." For five years, the Veto Act worked so well that it is no wonder if those who devised and passed it supposed that the matter was settled, and that the Church had indeed recovered her powers. When the minority in the Assembly saw how acceptable a body of Ministers—250 in the five years—was settled under this Act, they first learned to approve it, and then to avow their approbation. The tendency to dissent was supposed to be subsiding, and the Scotch clergy instituted the movement for Church extension which was described in a former chapter of our History.

Memorial, &c. p.5.

The Veto Law.

Memorial, 1841, p. 6.

There were secular persons, however, who were not satisfied to see the power of appointment to parishes dependent on the pleasure of the majority of the communicants. This dependence lessened the value of patronage, and, as these persons thought, its dignity; and they were by no means clear that the power given to the communicants by the Veto Act was compatible with the Act of Queen Anne. They were disposed to try the fact; and occasions for such an inquisition soon offered.

1839.

The Auchterarder Case.

Westminster Review, 1840, p. 475.

Lord Kinnoul presented a Mr. Young to the parish of Auchterarder. The heads of families in the congregation did not like the appointment, and vetoed it. The presbytery were ordered to take him on trial. They refused to do so, on the plea that he could not be ordained because the ecclesiastical conditions relating to his call by the people had not been fulfilled. Mr. Young applied to the Court of Session and the House of Lords to grant him both the civil benefice and the cure of souls. The decision of the Civil Courts was, that the presbytery must take him on trial, as he was competent in the three prescribed conditions—of life, literature, and doctrine; and the acts of the Kirk were not binding upon them. The Assembly did not contest this decision, as far as its civil relations went. They surrendered the stipend, house, and external privileges, to the patron and his nominee. This was in May, 1839.

The Church thus found that there really was an incompatibility between the Act of 1711 and their Veto Law of 1834. The thing to be done now was to maintain the principle of Non-intrusion, and endeavour to induce the legislature to modify the statute so as to bring the civil law into accordance with the conscience of the Church. While requesting this reform from the legislature, the Church acted mildly in regard to the Veto Law, suspending operations under it till the difficulty should have been accommodated. For two or three years no progress whatever was made; and through this delay circumstances arose which induced a more serious claim on behalf of the Church, and converted the whole affair into one of vital opposition.

Memorial, 1841, p. 13.

1840.

THE STRATHBOGIE CASE.

When the judgment in the Auchterarder case went against the Church, and in favour of the lay patron, no demand was made on the presbytery and the people to receive Mr. Young. When the fruits of the benefice were given up to him, they were left unmolested, and not required to surrender the spiritual freedom they held of declining the services of an unacceptable pastor. But, as there had been parties who had instituted a trial of the question thus far, so there were other parties who now resolved to push the experiment further, and ascertain what the connexion between the Church and the State really was. The Presbytery of Strathbogie had of old been celebrated for its zeal for the civil power, its loyalty to the Sovereign, and its leaning towards Episcopacy: and now it was the scene of the decisive struggle between the powers of the Church and the State.—In the parish of Marnoch, a Mr. Edwards had been assistant to the minister for three years, and was then nominated for minister, on the pulpit becoming vacant. He was so unacceptable, that the Call (the forms of which were preserved all this time) was signed by only one parishioner, while 261 out of 300 heads of families on the roll of communicants dissented. The one parishioner who signed the call was a publican; and he lost his business immediately. The Court next above the Presbytery—the Synod of Moray—directed the Presbytery to reject Mr. Edwards; but they did not do so till ordered by the highest authority of all—the General Assembly. When they had done it, an acceptable minister was presented. But Mr. Edwards obtained an interdict from the Court of Session against the settlement of the second nominee, and a declaration that the Presbytery were bound to take Mr. Edwards himself on trials. The members of the Presbytery were now in the painful position of being under contradictory orders from the General Assembly and the Court of Session—from the Church and the State. The General Assembly and its adherents took for granted that the members of the Presbytery ought to consult their spiritual superiors how to proceed: but such a consultation would have been of itself a surrender of the question. The seven members of the Presbytery determined for themselves to obey the civil power; and they admitted Edwards to trials.—They were brought to the bar of the General Assembly, where Dr. Chalmers moved for their deposition from the holy ministry. Dr. Cook, the leader of the State party in the Church—"the Moderates" as they were called—moved that the seven ministers at the bar should be dismissed, and confirmed in their present rank in the Church. Dr. Chalmers obtained a majority of 97 in an assembly of 347; and the Strathbogie ministers were sentenced to deposition. Their parishes were declared vacant; and Mr. Edwards was to be deprived of his license as a minister of the Church.

Westminster Review, 1840, p. 477.

Annual Register, 1841, p. 73.

The seven deposed ministers appealed to parliament; and their case was

1841.

Hansard, lviii. 1507.

brought forward by Lord Aberdeen on the 15th of June, 1841. Lord Melbourne let every body see that he did not understand the matter:—he had promised, certainly, to maintain the law, and he had no doubt the Lord Advocate would see that it was done:—these were very difficult questions, but they seemed to him to lie within the Church entirely;—and then he spoke so of the arrogance of the Church of Scotland, as to set the Lords laughing. Lord Haddington rebuked the vacillation and indifference of the Premier, declaring that it was owing to the weakness of the government—its carelessness, or hesitation—that the divisions in the Scotch Church had become what they were. The concluding statement of the Premier was that the government really meant to execute the law; and that the best way of doing that was to leave the law to execute itself. For want of a few words of earnest declaration of the intentions of government, however, the impression was very general that the Ministry were somewhat daunted by the imposing attitude of the ecclesiastical chiefs in Scotland, and disposed to leave the affair as much as possible to be managed in the Scotch Courts.

The deposed Ministers obtained an interdict forbidding all preachers of the Kirk from entering their pulpits. The Assembly forthwith deputed one of their chief members to go and preach there, and encouraged various ministers to officiate in those parishes regularly and perseveringly: thus compelling their licentiates to break the civil law, because their predecessors had broken their ecclesiastical law. Penalties hung over the heads of the preaching substitutes; and penalties had been imposed on those whom they superseded. This state of things could not last, or be endured. The number of public meetings which took place all over Scotland, and the vehemence of the speakers on both sides began to be a significant warning to parliament, that talking and laughing, and even wrangling, were no longer serious enough for the occasion. In truth, the reader of the newspapers of that time feels little inclination to smile, even in the midst of the extreme wonder which he feels at the point which party spirit can reach. The evidences of wrath and hatred are too strong, and the mutual imputations too shocking, to leave room for any amusement. To an impartial reader it appears that there never was a case in which men might more reasonably hold opposite opinions. The case was one of difficult decision to the wisest; for the perplexity lay deep in an abyss of compromise, and by no means within the grasp of passion and partisanship. The language used in regard to the Church leaders, on the one hand, and Mr. Edwards and the seven Strathbogie ministers, on the other, was, however, as violent as can ever have been used about monsters of vice. Such language led, as was natural, to violence of another kind. The pious attendants at church on critical occasions, and at public meetings, pelted one another with snow and with stones; and here and there, there was fighting enough to call for the interference of the police. The gravest thinkers, and men of the highest conscientiousness, saw more clearly, from month to month, that there was no alternative for the Church party but to withdraw from their connexion with the State. The choice lay merely between this and the surrender of the spiritual powers of the Church. They had staked every thing on their position, that the providing ministers for the people was a spiritual concern, though the disposal of the emoluments was a secular one. The State would not recede from its legal

Public Excitement.

Position of the Church Party.

function of supporting patronage; and the ecclesiastical party must therefore separate its function from its partnership with the civil law.

1843.

When this result was evidently becoming necessary, Lord Aberdeen, a member of the Peel ministry, which was now in power, made one last effort to preserve the unity of the Scotch Church by a Bill, intended to remove doubts respecting the admission of ministers to benefices in Scotland. A similar Bill, about which Lord Aberdeen and Dr. Chalmers had misunderstood one another, had been proposed, and withdrawn in 1840. It was not likely now, after three years of strong warfare, to be well received by Dr. Chalmers and his followers; and it was hardly intended for them, but rather for the large body of clergy who were unwilling to leave the Establishment, and yet must have a clear settlement of their consciences, by a distinct knowledge of their case, if they were to remain. In 1840, 400 ministers and 2,000 elders had declared in favour of the Bill: but now, though it passed through parliament, it was too late to affect materially the condition of the Church. It provided that the Presbytery to which any case of unacceptable nomination should be referred, should have power to inquire into the circumstances of the parish, and the number and character of objectors; and, if the objectors should appear to be in the right, the Presbytery had power to refuse to admit the nominee, being obliged, however, to specify the grounds of their decision. Next, the veto was abolished, being rendered unnecessary by the foregoing provision. In regard to the qualifications of a candidate, the appeal must lie to the Church Courts alone, as the Civil Courts could not have any concern with such a matter. The civil courts were, however, to hold themselves in readiness to interfere, in case of any excess of jurisdiction on the part of the church courts.—It was clear to all who saw how far the controversy now transcended the veto question, that Lord Aberdeen's Bill was no longer what the times required. It did nothing towards determining the province of civil and ecclesiastical jurisdiction on any ground of principle. Several of the Lords objected that it pronounced virtually against the decision in the Auchterarder case, and that it was inconsistent with the existing law of Scotland. The pleas in its favour all related to the necessity of allaying excitement in Scotland; and high legal authorities were adduced, which declared the Bill to be strictly in accordance with the law of Scotland, and with the decision upon the Auchterarder case: and thus was there as much to be said on both sides among the lawyers as among the excited population in the north.—It was the last day of July before the Bill was discussed in the Commons, after its passage through the Lords' House. The thinness of the House showed that even yet the full importance of the subject was not understood. Mr. Fox Maule, who ought to know, said that the Church party, now called the Seceders, took scarcely any interest whatever in the Bill: and when Sir R. Peel resorted to quotations from speeches in the Assembly about reliance on the government for interference for the settlement of consciences, he was describing a time long gone by, and a state of affairs which could never be renewed. It mattered little now, as regarded the immediate difficulty, whether the Bill passed or not. It became law on the 17th of August.

Lord Aberdeen's Bill.

Annual Register, 1843, p. 210.

Hansard, lxxi. 59.

Hansard, lxxi. 897.

We have said that the Church party were now called the Seceders. The time had indeed come. The Scotch Church was divided into irreconcilable parties. The incidents which led on to the secession were these.

1839—43.

The General Assembly.

At the last meeting of the General Assembly in 1842, two Addresses to the Crown had been proposed and agreed upon; one of which invited the attention of her Majesty to the encroachments of the Court of Session on the spiritual jurisdiction of the Church; and the other prayed that the Sovereign would order measures towards the abolition of Church patronage in Scotland.

Its Memorial.

Annual Register, 1843, p. 241.

A memorial to the Cabinet was also prepared; to which Sir James Graham replied in a letter issued on the 4th of January, 1843.

Reply of Government.

This was a letter of reasoning comment on the memorial sent in to ministers: and it presents a clear account of the government view—the view of "the Moderates,"—of the whole case. It occasioned much anger, and was spoken of with scorn—this "chopping of logic while the Church was falling in pieces"—this fiddling while the burning was going on: but it is evident that the party would have been more angry, and with better cause, if Sir James Graham had given a peremptory and unreasoned reply. The document ended with a clear declaration of government intentions. Government had been willing to attempt legislation, in a hope of a settlement: but "the acts of the General Assembly . . . . have unhappily diminished, so far at least as the Church is concerned, these reasonable hopes; and her Majesty's Ministers, now understanding that nothing less than the total abrogation of the rights of the Crown and of other patrons will satisfy the Church, are bound with firmness to declare that they cannot advise her Majesty to consent to the grant of any such demand."—This letter must be answered; and circumstances occurred in the Assembly which allowed the Church party to have all their own way in answering it.

Quoad Sacra Ministers.

It was a matter of contention in the Assembly, and also before the Civil Courts, whether a certain class of the clergy, called *quoad sacra* ministers—being the incumbents of non-parochial churches—should have the position and privileges of parochial ministers. As the Judges differed on this point, it was no wonder that the Assembly divided eagerly upon it. Five of the Judges sanctioned the claim of the *quoad sacra* ministers, and eight rejected it. Their opinion was declared on the 20th of January. On the 31st, the Assembly, constituting itself a commission, was to resolve on a reply to Sir James Graham.

Annual Register, 1843, p. 245.

Dr. Cook, the leader of the Moderates, moved the exclusion of the *quoad sacra* ministers who were present, as disqualified by law from sharing in the business. Dr. Cook's motion was negatived by a majority of 92: and the mover, with his minority, retired from the meeting whose proceedings could not be legal.

Petition of the Assembly.

A committee was formed by those who remained, for the purpose of preparing a petition to parliament, which was presented by Mr. Fox Maule, in the Commons, on the 7th of March.

Hansard, lxvii. 510.

The House, after a debate of two nights, decided by a vast majority—211 to 76—against appointing a committee to consider the petition. Not only the result, but the tone of the debate showed the Church party that they had nothing more to hope for from parliament.

Failure.

Every body spoke respectfully and decorously of the Church of Scotland; but nobody, except the members of the government and a few other speakers, seemed to know or care what the controversy was about. The House was quiet, but indifferent. Members were conscious of their ignorance, and had no hope of clearing up their minds by means of a single debate; so they sat still, and probably wished the matter over. One keen disappointment to the Church party was that Lord John Russell went against them on this occasion, after having seemed to admit their claims in a letter to his Scotch constituents of the City of London. It was not likely that the Whigs, who never showed themselves clear or decided on the question when they were in power, should have mastered the subject now: but the Church party attributed the change in Lord J. Russell's tone to his having received false information about the spirit and purposes of the Church party. It was believed that he was misled by some "Scotch Liberals" who declared, only one week before the secession, that the number of ministers who would give up their endowments would not exceed six.

Westminster Review, xl. p. 204.

PREPARATIONS FOR SECESSION.

Far indeed was this from the truth, as was seen when the memorable 18th of May, 1843, arrived. From the hour when the decision of parliament became known, the non-intrusion party pushed their preparations vigorously. Lecturers traversed all Scotland, canvassing for support for the Free Presbyterian Church, about to take its place in opposition to the Church of Scotland. —A fund was to be raised for the erection of churches and the support of ministers. Missionary objects were naturally united with the primary aim of protesting against the usurpation of the State over the Church. "We shall indeed," said Dr. Candlish on the 21st of March, "cultivate our own districts; we shall have stated congregations, with stated elders and ministers; but we shall have our tours of preaching too—our visits to all corners of the land; and I believe that yet, by God's blessing on our free and faithful preachings, in the highways and hedges, in barns and stables, in saw-pits and tents, we shall yet regenerate Scotland, and have multitudes of those who are now perishing for lack of knowledge to listen to the glad tidings of salvation." Though the season was one of severe commercial distress, 300,000*l.* were subscribed in a few months for the support of the Free Church.

Spectator, 1843, p. 296.

The next important matter was the election of commissioners to the General Assembly. The *quoad sacra* ministers had but little chance of election after the decision of the majority of the Judges on their claims. A persuasion prevailed that the Moderates would have all their own way in the Assembly. The 18th of May would show.

THE SECESSION.

The windows along the way were crowded on that day; and so was the gallery of St. Andrew's Church, where the Assembly held its sittings. The non-intrusion members were cheered as they entered. One of their leaders, Dr. Welsh, Moderator of the former Assembly, took the chair. After prayer, he did not, as is usual, proceed to make up the roll, but instead, read the Protest in which the non-intrusion members had recorded the grounds of their secession from the Assembly, and from alliance with the State. It was an act of excellent temper, taste, and prudence, in the seceders then to withdraw, without seeking controversy. To the number of 169 they took their hats, and walked out of the Church. As the foremost of them appeared at the door, the crowd in the streets set up a cheer; and the cheering continued, with few pauses, and only the disturbance of a few hisses, all the way to a hall at Canon-mills, where 300 more seceding clergy and a large and sympathizing auditory awaited them. In Dr. Chalmers's ensuing address, he took the pains which might be expected from him to explain that the seceders were not Dissenters. They left a vitiated establishment, but adhered to the Church, and claimed to be a more real Church than that which remained established. This

Annual Register, 1843, p. 247.

1839—43 was true now, as it had been true in regard to ancient secessions: and, as in their case, the matter will probably end, after a few years of protests against Voluntaryism, in the Free Churchmen being numbered among the Voluntaries of Scotland.

On the 20th, there was a demonstration which somewhat derogates from the dignity of the occasion. The Marchioness of Breadalbane was received in the Hall with loud cheers. In the course of proceedings this day, complaints were made that great landed proprietors would not grant the smallest portion of ground for new churches: but the zealous leaders declared that an old vessel here and there, moored along the shore, and tents that could be carried from place to place, would serve their needs. On the next day, Sunday, the first Secession Church, which had been built in six weeks, was opened; and neither it, nor the Hall, where Dr. Chalmers preached, nor the Church attended by the Queen's High Commissioner, could contain the eager crowds that resorted to them.—On the next day, the 22nd, the General Assembly made haste to undo the acts of the seceders—excluding the *quoad sacra* ministers (though with kindly wishes for their admission under a parochial right) and reinstating the seven Strathbogie ministers. Then followed the deposition of the seceders, and the declaration that their parishes were vacant. On the same day, the seceders, formed into an Assembly of their own, renounced their brethren of the Establishment in much the same mode. An Act of Separation was decreed; and on the next day, it was produced for signature, previous to its being transmitted to the Assembly. Prayer preceded and followed the signing of the Act—four hours being occupied in affixing the signatures. An Address to the Queen was passed, and much business in connexion with their new position transacted; and then, having agreed to hold another Assembly in October, at Glasgow, the meetings dissolved. The General Assembly was also dissolved on the 29th—a day on which many a heart throbbed, and many an eye was moistened, at the thought that all was now over, and the beloved and venerated old Kirk of Scotland rent in twain.

Counter Proceedings. Annual Register, 1843, p. 253.

Act of Separation.

Spirit of the Movement.

The noble and animating feature of this ecclesiastical revolution is that which is found on all such occasions—the disinterestedness of the movers. Of that heroic disinterestedness there never was, or could be, any question. The Seceders were violent in their partisanship, and unjust in their judgments of those whom they left behind;—they had the faults of a revolutionary era; but their earnestness and their spirit of self-sacrifice were sublime. As early as that memorable May week, there were 500 clergy, who had left home, neighbours, station, and competence, and thrown themselves into a position where they might have to endure poverty for the rest of their lives, and could not escape much tribulation and toil. And they were well supported by a host as earnest as themselves;—by men and women who were ready to spend and be spent in the cause. While the difficulties remained which were occasioned by the refusal of landowners to grant sites for churches, aged men and tender women attended worship, like the old Covenanters, in frost and rain—under the tempests and heats of summer, and the blasts and snows of winter, on the seashore, in the wild ravine, and on the exposed hill-side. Several of the large proprietors held out for a long time, naturally doubting whether they ought to grant aid of any kind to parties who had, as they supposed, set up against the government and the law courts. But these not only became better aware of what is due to religious liberty, but took warning from the frequent rising up of the question, what right any man could have to hold land so as to keep back God's earth, to the last corner, from worshippers who wanted merely space to kneel on. When it was seen that this high-church movement might generate an agrarian agitation, the Seceders were indulged with a choice of sites for their churches.

Thus did Scotland lead the way in proving the principle of Church establishments, in alliance with the State. There is a general feeling that the affair is not over—that the Establishment in Scotland now remains a mere temporary arrangement; and that the Establishment in England and Ireland must sooner or later come into question in somewhat a similar way.

THE RELIGIOUS WORLD IN ENGLAND.

In the English Establishment, the disturbances whose first outbreak has been described, became more threatening and more painful from year to year. It could not be otherwise; for the differences between the three parties in the Church were fundamental; and their controversies must be brought to an issue before unity and tranquillity could be restored. One of the most significant circumstances in connexion with the religious state of the nation is that Dissent appears to have gained nothing by the divisions in the Establishment. While the High Churchmen were mourning over the certain destruction of the Church from the interference of the government with it; and while the Low Church party were denouncing the influence of the world, and struggling to revive religion by building churches—as if the spirit could be created by forms, instead of forms being the manifestation of the spirit; and while Dr. Arnold was writing "I groan over the divisions of the Church . . . . I begin now to think that things must be worse before they are better, and that nothing but some great pressure from without will make Christians cast away their idols of sectarianism; the worst and most mischievous by which Christ's church has ever been plagued;"—while such were the lamentations of Churchmen of every order, we find the Dissenters stating, with solemn grief, in their annual Reports, that their numbers and their zeal were fearfully declining. At the Wesleyan Conference in 1845, the decrease of members was declared to exceed 5,000. The New Connexion of Wesleyans announced a decrease also, and directed an inquiry into the causes, and "a prayerful consideration" of them. "The event," they declared, "ought to be regarded as a source of deep abasement and sorrow before God." In the same year, the Committee of the Baptist Union announced that the condition of their churches was, where not stationary, retrograde. Of their 507 churches, 142 had "suffered a clear diminution:" "a fact which is fitted," they say, "to give rise to serious and salutary reflection." At the meeting of the Congregational Union, the denomination was announced to be "diminishing rather than increasing." The same appears to have been true about some of the smaller sects. The Quakers had, some time before this, released their young people, by an act of their Yearly Meeting, from the obligation to wear the dress, and use the peculiar speech, of their sect. Their leaders mourned the necessity, but declared that the preservation of these observances was now found to cost more than they were worth. Discontent and resentment had become common among

CHURCHMEN.

DISSENTERS.

1839—43. the young who found "their cross" too hard to bear; and they would break bounds, and desert their sect, if this much indulgence were not granted them. So, from this time it must become more and more uncommon to see young faces under the neat drab bonnet and the broad brim, and it seemed probable that in two or three more generations the Quaker garb would be seen only in old prints.—The Catholics alone appear to have been decidedly increasing in numbers during this season of discouragement to Protestant sects: and their further increase was provided for by the going over of a considerable number of the High Church party into their communion.

Troubles in the Church.

Annual Register, Law Cases, p. 364.

The records of the time show how the contending religious parties strove to gain upon each other by bearing to the utmost upon those points of doubt and compromise which in ordinary times are approached fearfully and tenderly. The Church rate struggle went on: and we find an unusual number of refusals to marry and to bury, on account of supposed non-compliance with the conditions of the Church. In 1841, a suit was brought against a Lincolnshire clergyman by parents whose child he had refused to bury; the refusal being based on the ground that the child was really unbaptized, having been baptized only by a Wesleyan minister. The judgment, which was given against the clergyman, proceeded on the ground that lay-baptism was not denounced as a corruption at the Reformation, when an enumeration of corruptions was made; and no clergyman could take upon himself to pronounce any baptism invalid which was not declared so by the framers of the rubric. The clergyman appealed; but this judgment was affirmed; and the Tractarians did not think the better of Protestantism for such a result.—The Bishop of Exeter was one of the most conspicuous movers during the period of Church disturbance. We find him, in 1844, suspending one of his clergy for a term, for having omitted some words of Christian assurance in the burial service, when interring a man supposed to have died in a state of intoxication. The supposition was a mistake; but the Bishop declared that if it had not been so, the liberty taken would have been no less reprehensible. This is very well, as discountenancing the notion that any man can undertake to condemn the dead; and the moral mischief of promising future bliss alike to the good and bad remains chargeable upon the appointment of an inflexible ritual.—From this time, the Bishop seems to have held his power of ecclesiastical censure always in his hand, ready for use; and his clergy and their flocks were thus stimulated to a contention which soon became a scandal too gross to be endured. He took occasion by one of these quarrels to draw up and promulgate an order of observance of doctrine and ritual, consisting of ten points, which certainly did not conduce to the restoration of peace in the Church. He laid down the law about preaching in the surplice, about postures and forms, and goings out and comings in, and refusal of burial and of the sacraments, in a fashion which irresistibly reminds the reader of the most emphatic descriptions of Pharisaic observances in the gospels: and no one out of the diocese was surprised to hear in a few weeks of actual riots in the churches and streets of Exeter.—The clergy began to baptize in the midst of the service: and this seems to have been unresisted: but when they appeared in the surplice to preach, those hearers who feared the introduction of popish forms left the churches, Sunday after Sunday.—The clergy persevered: the people held parish meetings, where

Annual Register, 1844. Chron. 83.

Annual Register, 1844, p. 125.

Annual Register, 1844, p. 146.

they proposed to appeal to the body of prelates, and to the Queen in Council, "for a settlement of this uncalled-for disturbance." The clergy were hooted in the streets; and the interior of the churches presented a spectacle very unlike that of devotional tranquillity. During January, 1845, the evil increased so that the Bishop and the most obstinate of his clergy were compelled to yield. The church of St. Sidwell's was so noisy, that prayers could not be heard: the congregation rose in a body on the appearance of the surplice, and many went out. Two thousand people were collected outside to hoot the pastor: and it was with difficulty that a strong body of police protected him to his lodgings. It will be seen at once that the contention was not, in fact, about vestments and forms, but about something far more serious; the question, namely, whether the compromises of the composite Protestant Church should be respected, as allowing such liberty of expansion, and difference of views and observance, as are rendered necessary by change of times, or whether the forms of a past century should be adhered to with a rigidity which must compel either a rupture of the Protestant, or a return to the Catholic church. A truce was obtained in Exeter by the Bishop yielding, and instructing his clergy to yield, for the sake of peace.

At Oxford.

Forcibly as such proceedings pressed themselves on public attention, the strongest interest of the crisis lay at Oxford, where matters could no longer go on as they had done for some years. The Bishops seemed no nearer than ever to agreement among themselves, nor to fitness to deal with the controversy of the time. One recommended peace; as if peace or truce were possible after the appeal had once been made to principle and conscience. Others strove hard to take no notice. Others left their clergy to act, each on his own conscience. No one of them can be found to have made anywhere a plain statement of the controversy, as between the Tractarian party and the other two Church sects, or as between the Church of Rome and that of England, together with a declaration on the one side or the other. The Bishop of Oxford interfered to prohibit the issue of the Tracts, after the appearance of No. XC., which contained doctrine too nearly approaching to Romanism in the matter of private judgment to be allowed to pass under the eye of a Protestant bishop. From this time, the Tractarian leaders were regarded with a disapprobation, on the part of all single-minded persons, which must compel their speedy retreat from the position they held as (in Dr. Arnold's words), "Roman Catholics at Oxford instead of at Oscott—Roman Catholics signing the articles of a Protestant church, and holding offices in its ministry." From this time (1841) they were sure to be keenly watched, and every opportunity seized for dislodging them from a position which they were conceived to hold treacherously. Those who wished well to the Church would have been glad to see something else done, besides this necessary but low and disagreeable work: but they were obliged to be contented with witnessing the Tractarians compelled to see and acknowledge that they were Romanists; and with discovering that, when they were gone, a "reaction" must ensue, as injurious to the integrity, and reputation, and usefulness, of the Church, as any of the changes that had occurred.

Life, ii. p. 279.

Dr. Pusey.

Dr. Pusey was the first of the sect chosen for punishment. Being called on to preach before the University in the spring of 1843, he discoursed on the

Eucharist, and was considered by some of his hearers to utter Romish doctrine about Transubstantiation and the Mass. The subject was brought before a Board of Convocation; and their report was such as to compel the Vice-Chancellor to suspend Dr. Pusey from preaching within the precincts of the University for two years. The accused demanded a hearing, and liberty of arguing the matter; without which he declared the sentence to be "unstatutable, as well as unjust." His protest was, of course, disregarded.—Dr. Hampden, himself a sufferer not long before, from inquisition into his opinions, did now what he could, as Regius Professor of Divinity, to guard the Church from false doctrine. He proposed to a candidate for the degree of Bachelor of Divinity subjects for exercises which must test his opinions on Transubstantiation and the authority of Tradition. The candidate refused to write on these subjects, and claimed the right to select his own. Dr. Hampden prevented his obtaining his degree. The candidate sued him in the Vice-Chancellor's Court, but failed in his suit. Much regret was caused by this proceeding; for it was dangerous. It led too surely to a recognition of the incompatibility between the service of the Church and the right of private judgment.—In the same year, a Mr. Ward, a clergyman, published a book, called "The Ideal of a Christian Church Considered," some of which was declared to be inconsistent with the Thirty-nine Articles; and he was called before Convocation to answer for his work. The remarkable scene of his degradation took place on the 13th of February, when several bishops, and lay lords and commoners conspicuous in the religious world, crowded into Oxford, and intermingled with above a thousand clergymen in the Hall. Mr. Ward's argument was that the Articles could not be conscientiously signed by any considerable number of persons, if they were taken in "a natural sense;" and he therefore contended for "a non-natural sense," as the only method of meeting an inevitable difference of views. Mr. Ward's degradation was carried by a small majority; the numbers being 569 to 511.—Beside Mr. Ward stood the Rev. F. Oakeley, a fellow of the same college, and minister of the Margaret-street chapel. He dared the Bishop of London to move in accordance with Oxford, by writing to him an avowal that he believed, though he did not teach, several of the doctrines of the Romish church, and that he claimed liberty to hold his own opinions, while not injuring the church which he desired to serve. He challenged the bishop to institute proceedings against him for subscribing the Articles in the same sense as Mr. Ward. The bishop instituted proceedings in the Court of Arches. Mr. Oakeley declined to defend himself in that court: and, on the other hand, the bishop declined to accept his resignation while the suit was pending. The judge decided that Mr. Oakeley had rendered himself liable to ecclesiastical censure. He was deprived of his license, forbidden to preach till he should have retracted his errors, and condemned to pay costs.

Annual Register, 1843, Chron. 67.
Dr. Hampden.

Annual Register, 1844, Chron. 3.

Mr. Ward.

Annual Register, 1845, Chron. 31.
Mr. Oakeley.

Annual Register, 1845, Chron. 95.

These unseemly and painful transactions excited a spirit of jealous watchfulness elsewhere. A book published by a clergyman was the occasion of a charge of unfaithfulness to the Book of Common Prayer; and the author was reprimanded by the judge in the Arches Court, and suspended for three years. And next we find the churchwardens of Richmond complaining to the archdeacon of the officiating pastors; that, under the sanction of the bishop of the diocese, and on the plea of custom, they failed to observe some of the particulars

Annual Register, 1843, Chron. 159.

of the Rubric. To those who had read history, and understood the laws of opinion, it was clear that the Church was far from being served by proceedings which drove men back upon the principles of private judgment; and they saw that whenever the Tractarians should have quitted Oxford for Rome, they would leave behind them no small number who, perceiving the impossibility of establishing uniformity of belief, would be as willing to hold station and maintenance in the Church, without holding its doctrines, as the men who had been driven out.—The process of going over to Rome now began in earnest. Many became Catholic priests before Mr. Newman himself, who had long been a Romanist in every thing but profession. When he resigned his Protestant holdings, he was followed by a crowd. Here and there a beneficed clergyman, and a host of curates, and laymen of all ranks, with their families, took the decisive step, and told their friends, or late parishioners, that they had found "the Church"—had been received into "the Church,"—and could look with compassion on the members of a schismatical and pretended church, which merely deluded its adherents to perdition.

Tractarian Secession.

After this riddance, it was hoped that the Church would revive and spread. But it did not. The events of late years had greatly stimulated the clergy, and improved the character of their ministrations. But the complaint still was, and is, that the people do not enter the Church, and find in it the life that it assumes to be able to give. Time will show whether this is owing to the reaction following upon the Catholic movement, or whether lapse of centuries and change of circumstances have made the Church, as now constituted, unsuitable to the needs of those to whom, distinctively, the gospel was preached in its first days. Great efforts were made by the zealous and the opulent to propagate Christianity abroad, and to establish churches in our foreign dependencies, and to build new churches and send out more clergy at home; the number of new churches built during the movement—not a few by the beneficence of individuals—is indeed remarkable; but the old edifices were left as empty as before, and no evidences have appeared of any redemption of the mass of the people from ignorance and indifference. While thus the failure of the Church to perform its work was clearly not owing to any lack of zeal and generosity in the upper classes, it seems that Lord Henley and Dr. Arnold and other Church reformers must have been right in supposing that the old structure was no longer suited to the needs of the time, but must be extensively altered and enlarged.

Death of Dr. Arnold.

Just when government was taking to heart this state of things, and was about to propose to amend it, Dr. Arnold was called away. It was in the midst of the dissensions and the weakness of the Church—dissensions and weakness which had caused him the severest pain of his life—that he was suddenly withdrawn from the scene in which he had wrought so actively. His desires for reform had caused him to be held in fear and hatred by the High Church party; and his language in regard to the Evangelical party was never such as to conciliate their good-will. At the same time, he was too much of a churchman, and had tampered too much with his own mind in early life with regard to subscription to the Articles, to have any power of appreciating the principles and position of the Dissenters. It was therefore only with the Moderate Church that he could be in cordial communion; and, 1839—43. owing to the independence of his views, and the peremptory manner in which he issued them, he was feared and disliked by many of his own Church party, as strongly as he was honoured and adored by others. It is on other grounds than his relation to the Church that his posthumous reputation rests. He was the most earnest public man of his time—of a time when earnestness was supremely needed and was sadly deficient. He presented the spectacle of a man of not only blameless, but exalted and holy life, who lived wholly and solely for what seemed to him truth and good. It was and is felt to be a pity that his views of truth and good were impaired by narrowness of view and of experience, and by a want of knowledge of men and affairs; so that his earnestness led him to devise and judge and insist on matters, and for persons and classes, which he did not understand—as when he would have made a declaration of Christian belief an indispensable requisite to the full enjoyment of political and social rights; a method which would have acted as a premium on hypocrisy, and have done violence to some of the best consciences in the community: but such defects did not neutralize the value of his earnestness and transparent sincerity, conspicuous as they were in the midst of the indifference or the formalism and insincerity of the time. And he communicated this earnestness and sincerity to a large number of those who are becoming the men of a later time. As an educator, he put his heart into his work, and laboured there as elsewhere, for truth and good. The views which he considered invaluable may not be in every case held by those whom he trained to hold ideas on conviction only; points which he insisted on as indispensable may appear otherwise to his pupils in their maturity; but they owe to him the power and the conscience to think for themselves, and the earnest habit of mind which makes their conviction a part of their life. By this exalted view and method as an educator, Dr. Arnold did more for education than even by his express and unintermitting assertion of the importance of the function—powerful as his testimony was. At the head of Rugby School, he had large opportunities both for testimony and action; and what he did will never be forgotten. His life was a public blessing while it lasted; and it has become more so since his death; for his virtues and his toils are not now, as when he lived, obscured by the local and temporary strifes which always prevent men from doing justice to each other, and vitiate the noblest perspective of character, rendering prominent what need be scarcely seen, and hiding the grandest features behind mere magnified accidents. The horror with which he and the Tractarian leaders spoke of each other is forgotten now. Those leaders have found their Church; and he is seen to have been the man required in his place by the moral wants of the age; as conspicuously a public benefactor as worthy of the love and reverence which waited upon his private life. He died in 1842, the day before the completion of his 47th year.

Death of Sydney Smith.

In the midst of the government action for bringing the Church and the people together, another clergyman died, whose view of Church matters was more secular than any held by the ecclesiastical reformers of the time. It seems strange that Sydney Smith should ever have been in the Church; and it is far from strange that earnest ecclesiastics should have been scandalized at his method of treatment of some matters which were to them as solemn and serious as the gospel. He was, in truth, a moralist and not a religious guide:

and he could as little conceive of a spiritual call to the clerical office as his enemies could give him credit for earnestness about the matters which appeared to him most serious. In his letters about the Ecclesiastical Commission, he speaks throughout of the "prizes" in the Church as the inducement to men to go into it: and he never appears to conceive of any higher impulsion: but perhaps few of the most spiritual and devoted ministers of the Church have so fervently, constantly, and powerfully, advocated the interests of duty, and shown the beauty of the things that are honest, pure, lovely, and of good report. It does not follow that because he was the greatest wit of his time, and of strong social inclinations, he was spoiled. He could admonish and satirize the great, as well as the lowly; and his sympathies were always on the side of the suffering and oppressed. His advocacy was always on behalf of the liberal and progressive side of the questions of the day. He quizzed Dissenters and Churchmen all round, exhibiting fanaticism, worldliness, bigotry, and all manner of foibles, wherever he saw them, but always aiding the claimants of freedom of opinion. He quizzed all the parties concerned about Catholic emancipation: but he did more for the Catholics than perhaps any divine ever did before for a body under disqualification for religious opinion. He felt too strongly about negro slavery to quiz the parties in that case; but his wit there took the form of a branding indignation, an impassioned irony, which might pierce the brain and marrow of the oppressor. That his name was always connected with the Edinburgh Review, of which he was one of the founders, shows that his position in the Church was that of alliance with the government; and he openly regarded the Church as an institution for the teaching and training of the people in Christian morality, with the support, and under the sanction, of the government. His views appear to have prompted him to the duty of a good pastor in his country residence; for, while he was eagerly sought in London society, and his writings keenly read wherever they could make their way, he was welcomed on his return home by the humblest of his neighbours—the old men and women to whom, as he said, he gave good things for their rheumatism, without any mixture of the Thirty-nine Articles. If it be granted that he was a moralist, and by no means a divine, it may be considered a matter of congratulation that the Church had, in a season of great peculiarity, a minister who waged effectual war against cant and fanaticism, and who, closely connected with ruling statesmen, lifted up his voice, without fear or favour, for justice and reasonableness on every hand. He rebuked Whig statesmen, when he thought them tampering with the property of the clergy, as soundly as any Wesleyan fanatic or Tractarian formalist; and one such plain-speaking logician and wit might be welcomed to a place in the ranks of the clergy; especially under the certainty that such another would never appear in one age. He held a living of moderate value in Somersetshire, and was made a Canon Residentiary of St. Paul's in 1831, when he was already growing old. He died in the 77th year of his age, in February, 1845, while contemplating, with some amusement, and something of the contempt with which old age views new enterprises, the attempts of government and zealous members of the Church to bring the Establishment more effectually within reach of the popular need.

Augmentation of Clergy.

On the 5th of May, 1843, Sir R. Peel offered a project to parliament of

Hansard, lxviii. 1316.

which he said as follows: "The advantage I anticipate is, that by this proceeding I shall place the Church of England in a favourable light before the people of this country; and conciliate towards it that favour and affection to which I believe it to be justly entitled, and lay the foundation of extended usefulness. Those foundations must be widened. It is in vain that you have splendid cathedrals, and bishops highly endowed; in vain you have dignitaries and splendid edifices, if you fail to impress on the people the conviction that great practical advantages are to be derived from them. Unless in populous districts you bring the ministrations of the Church within the reach of the people, it is in vain that you support its dignitaries, for the polished columns of the temple will not be secure, unless you widen the basis on which they rest. Here is the point in which the Church of England is wanting at present: her parochial constitution was made in other times, and suited to other states of the people: you must divide parishes, and bring ministers into them, and you will thus add at once to the respectability, to the influence, and to the property, of the Church, by applying her present property to strengthen her position, and increase her influence." All that could be done by preparation and arrangement was to be attempted now. The body was to be made ready, if the spirit would but come. Thus much it was right to do, that, if the Church should finally fail to redeem the masses of the people, the failure might be through no neglect of their rulers. And the proposal of the Minister was so well received as to obviate all difficulty and all waste of time. "My examination into the management of Church property," he said, on this occasion, "leads me to think that there may be very material improvements in its administration." The proposal was to bring into combined operation the Boards of Ecclesiastical Commissioners and of Queen Anne's Bounty, by a method which would largely increase the means of augmenting small livings, and afford funds for providing a considerable addition to the numbers of the clergy. The Minister did not propose to spend any of the money on new churches, as the last few years had shown how much could be done by the zeal of individuals and private society. To follow up the recent church-building by making permanent endowments for ministers was the object. The House agreed unanimously to the project.

Colonial Bishoprics.

It was not only at home that church-extension was to be promoted. In 1841, the Prelates of England and Ireland agreed on an appeal to the religious public for the raising of a fund for founding Colonial Bishoprics: and in the next year, the Bishop of London directed his clergy, in a Pastoral Letter, to have collections made in their churches for the purpose, recommending the ancient method, now revived by the Tractarian clergy, of making these offerings a part of the service. In August of the same year (1842) five Colonial Bishops were consecrated in Westminster Abbey—their sees being that of Barbadoes (not new) and the four new ones of Antigua, Guiana, Gibraltar, and Tasmania (Van Diemen's Land). The Bishop of New Zealand had already sailed for his distant diocese.—A bishopric had been established at Jerusalem, in 1841, under the joint auspices of Prussia and England—a scheme of much less promise than the formation of colonial sees. British subjects residing in British territory have a clear right of access to the services of the national Church: but it is quite a different thing to plant a missionary Church in a country where the Christian religion is despised by inhabitants of two races

Annual Register, 1842: Chron. 39.

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who have each a faith of their own which they value as highly as the stranger can value his. By the very nature of the Mohammedan and Jewish faiths, their sincere and enlightened votaries cannot undergo conversion: and the scheme has, thus far, had no success which can justify its continuance. The institution of the Jerusalem mission stands as a curious instance of zeal for Church-extension abroad at a time when the Church was practically in a state of painful and depressing feebleness at home.

CONSOLIDATION OF SEES.

The plan of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners to constitute bishoprics at Ripon and Manchester by consolidating the sees of Bristol and Gloucester, and of St. Asaph and Bangor, met with a revived opposition in 1843. Every one agreed that the establishment of the see of Ripon was a public benefit; and every one desired to see a Bishop of Manchester. But there were three objections, moved by different parties, to the carrying out of the plan. The Earl of Powis, who brought forward the subject in the House of Lords, insisted that the Welsh bishoprics were wanted, with all their revenues, for the Welsh. The High Church party continued their protests against the government and its Commission touching any of the ancient bishoprics at all; but the greatest difficulty, that which was admitted in the debates to be at the bottom of the opposition, was the proposal that any English bishop should be inadmissible to the House of Lords. The Duke of Wellington manfully avowed that any increase in the number of bishops in the House would excite great jealousy throughout the country: and the Archbishop of Canterbury advocated the plan of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners: but the Bishop of London adverted to the fact that all bishops sit in parliament in virtue of their baronies, and dreaded lest the omission of any of them should in time generate a desire to dispense with the parliamentary duty of the bishops altogether. The Bishop of Exeter wished for more bishops, both in the country and in the House, but suggested that a parliamentary attendance by rotation, as in the case of the Irish prelates, might be arranged. Among the other bishops there was a remarkable variety of opinions; and the result of the discussion was that Lord Powis withdrew his Bill, with a promise to bring it forward again next session.

Hansard, lxix. 756.

1844.

Before the next session, the Welsh disturbances had occurred; and this gave an advantage to the parties for whom the Earl of Powis was spokesman. There had before been many petitions against the union of the sees; and now there were more still—from the clergy throughout the country, and from all classes in Wales—no doubt under the influence of their clergy. In parliament, the ground of debate still was the increase or diminution of the number of bishops in the House, the Bishop of Bangor actually venturing to remind the nation that there was a time when forty bishops sat with a small number of lay peers, thirty or forty mitred abbots having seats in the House. That, however, was before Manchester, and the two millions who now needed a bishop there, existed: and the Archbishop of Canterbury still thought that those two millions ought to be considered before the 350,000 Welsh who were now divided between two sees: and the four archdeacons to be given to Wales would amply suffice, with one bishop. The second reading of Lord Powis's bill for repealing the arrangement of the Commission was carried: but its progress was then stopped by a very unusual proceeding. On the 1st of July,

Hansard, lxxv. 499.

1839—43. STRUGGLES OF GOVERNMENT AND CHURCH. Hansard, lxxvi. 124.

the Duke of Wellington declared that the Bill touched the prerogative of the Crown, and that he was not authorized to give the consent of the sovereign to its further discussion. A Committee, appointed to search for precedents, reported that the fact was indeed as the Duke of Wellington had stated: and Lord Powis therefore withdrew his Bill, declaring that the matter could not rest here. This was indeed evident enough: for the question was assuming the aspect of a contest between the government and the Church; such a contest as was becoming more significant and more dangerous with every new dispute. Before the debate was closed on the present occasion, it was carefully made known by the law lords that the sovereign had no power to stop discussion in either House of parliament; and that the intimation just made was to be understood as a timely hint that the royal assent would not be given to any measure which might result from the debate. In the next session, the Bill of Lord Powis was thrown out by a large majority on the first division. 1845. Hansard, lxxxviii. 286. In the session of 1846, the opposition of the Crown was withdrawn, and the Bill passed the Lords; but it was dropped in the Lower House, on a promise from the new Minister, Lord John Russell, that the government would consider the subject before another session. In due time, the new see of Manchester was provided with a bishop; and then the sees of Bangor and St. Asaph were allowed to remain apart. But the contest between the government and the Church was renewed on a more perilous ground—that of the appointment of a bishop to the see of Hereford. One of the compromises involved in the union of the Church and State was in question in this case; and the Minister, Lord J. Russell, apparently unaware of the peril of the part he took, cast aside the delicacy usually observed by statesmen in approaching that particular compromise, and pushed the claim of the royal prerogative to an extent most galling and offensive to the Church in insisting on the election of Dr. Hampden to the see of Hereford. This is the latest instance of Church and State conflict: but every one knows that it cannot be the last. While waiting for the next occasion, our statesmen have the warning of the Church of Scotland before them;—a warning against bearing hard on old compromises unless they are prepared for a new revolution; a warning of what men will do and sacrifice for principle when their religious powers and privileges are believed by them to be in danger; a warning against the notion that the bulk of any nation can regard the church of its faith as an instrument of mere religious police under the direction of the government. A Church must be more than this, or it must presently be nothing: and, because it must be more than this if any thing, it is clear that its alliance with the State can subsist only as long as a spirit of benevolent moderation is devoutly cherished on both sides.

A singular incident which occurred during this critical period is an illustration of such a spirit exercised by a High Churchman of eminence. Dr. Hook, Vicar of Leeds, honourably distinguished by a vast sacrifice of patronage to the interests of the Church, was brought into close connexion with the Chartists of the town by the determination of that body to elect churchwardens from their own body. They did so in 1842, and when the election of 1843 was to Annual Register, 1843. Chron. 53. take place, Dr. Hook declared on the spot that he must say that they were the only body of Churchwardens who had conducted themselves in an honourable, straightforward, and gentlemanly manner. They told him fairly that they differed from him on many points: but declared that, if they undertook the office, they would conscientiously strive to discharge its duties. They had done so; and he could not therefore wish for better churchwardens, unless the persons assembled would let him have some from among the members of the Established Church. Would they do so? The meeting answered in the negative: and when the Vicar read over a list of names, those of the Chartists were carried with acclamation: and their election was received with a good grace. It must have been a singular scene.

Dissenters' Chapels Bill.

During this period occasion arose for testing the principles of the Administration in regard to religious liberty: an occasion which involved a question of great nicety, and therefore a test of unusual decisiveness. The excitement throughout the kingdom was very strong; and indeed the controversy about Dissenters' endowments was the prominent one, in connexion with parliament, of 1844. It was scarcely possible that the Ministers could have foreseen how their proposition would become the basis of a religious movement: but when it did, and when the movement assumed all the violence which belongs to religious movements in critical times, they held their ground calmly and firmly, as protectors of justice, showing throughout a sensibility to religious liberty which won for them such esteem from the enlightened portion of the people as abundantly compensated for the loss of support from the bigotted and the half-informed who made up the Opposition. It was, in fact, a case in which there could not be two opinions among honest men fully informed of the facts. But a multitude of honest zealots were not fully informed of the facts; and they carried on a most formidable resistance under a wrong impression. The story was this.

In the reign of Charles II. a certain Lady Hewley left certain manors in York in trust to support "godly preachers of Christ's Holy Gospel." The lady herself had, of course, no idea that a doubt would ever arise as to what sort of "preachers" her bequest was intended to benefit. They must be dissenters; for the clergy of the Romish and English Churches were never called "preachers" in her time; and she was well known to be herself a dissenter, and devoted to dissenting interests. Unitarians were not heard of in her day; and, if heard of, they would have been called, by Lady Hewley among other Trinitarians, blasphemers, or any thing rather than "godly preachers of Christ's Holy Gospel." But the religious body to which Lady Hewley belonged was that which has since become, by gradual change, the Unitarian body of the present day. Naturally and necessarily, they have baptized their infants and buried their dead in the chapels endowed by Lady Hewley's fund; and that fund naturally and inevitably contributed to the support of the young ministers who went forth from the congregations worshipping in those chapels. Of late years, however, dissenters sprung from a sect to which Lady Hewley did not belong, but who conceived themselves to hold the opinions professed by her when she made her will, thought that their ministers and congregations ought to be the recipients of her bequest, and that the Unitarians had forfeited their right to hold it when they relinquished the doctrine which she considered that of "Christ's Holy Gospel." A Report of the Charity Commissioners sanctioned the inquiry; and a bill was filed in

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Chancery to dispossess the Unitarians. The Judges of the Court decided against the Unitarians, who appealed to the Lords. The Lords required the opinion of the twelve Judges. With the exception of one of their number, Maule, the Judges were unanimous in their opinion (delivered in June, 1842) that the Unitarians were excluded from the bequest, and that the property ought to belong to the Trinitarian Protestant Dissenters. The Lords, of course, affirmed the judgment of the Court of Chancery. After a litigation of fourteen years, this decision was pronounced in August 1842. After all it settled nothing but the exclusion of the Unitarians, and left the property unappropriated.

Annual Register, 1842. Chron. 108.

Annual Register, 1842. Chron. 135.

The difficulties of this case were produced by lapse of time and consequent changes of opinion, and not by fault on any hand: but they were difficulties of so serious a kind that the government saw the necessity of preventing their perpetual recurrence by an Act which should forbid the unsettlement of ancient property, and disorganizing quarrels about such property, on every material change of opinion in religious sects. It was a bad thing that an interest in property should be directly implicated with particular opinions. It was a bad thing that any sect should be under temptation to covet the property of another. It was a bad thing that an honest change of opinion should involve the penalty of surrendering the graves of ancestors, the old places of family worship, and all the religious haunts which are at least as dear to nonconformists, whose fathers have suffered for their faith, as the most solemn cathedral and the most venerable ivied church in the country can be to those who worship there. It is bad that, as in the Hewley case, years of litigation should consume funds and irritate tempers, and leave a painful doubt at last whether justice can ever be done; whether, if the holders cannot be said to have a right to the property, it can ever be certainly decided, by any judges on earth, that it ought to be given to any body else. To obviate such mischiefs as these, the government brought a Bill before parliament which should confirm to all religious bodies the possession of the property which they had held for the preceding twenty years. The Lord Chancellor brought in this Bill; and though it was opposed by a few Bishops and Lay Lords, it passed the Upper House by a considerable majority. During the debate, however, an agitation had been begun which soon extended to almost every town in England, convoked public meetings where violent resolutions were carried, and loaded the table of the House of Commons with as many petitions as had gone up against Sir James Graham's Educational clauses. The reason of the violence was that the Bill was supposed to be devised for the benefit of the Unitarians. The supposition was a mistake: but it was natural enough in persons who were not well informed in regard to some preceding legislation.

Hansard, lxxiv. 831.

It was not only that Lady Hewley's case had furnished the warning and suggestion on which the Ministerial bill proceeded. The first clause had a special bearing on Unitarian property. In 1813, the exceptions in the Act of Toleration — exceptions which affected the Unitarians exclusively — were repealed; and from that time, the Unitarians were as firmly assured in the possession of religious trust property as any other sect. But, by an omission, the Act had not been made retrospective; and therefore, though the property of Unitarians instituted since 1813, was safe, they were at the mercy of litigation for all that had been in their hands from an earlier date. The first clause of the present Bill went merely to repair this omission: but the Dissenting sects which contemplated claiming Unitarian property, as in the Hewley case, made an outcry that government was intercepting property which should soon become theirs, and settling it in preference upon the Unitarians. The matter was clearly explained by the Attorney General, when he introduced the Bill in the Commons on the 6th of June. He showed how, in the case of the Roman Catholics, similar assurance had been made retrospective, as a matter of course; and declared that the present Bill was prepared on the recommendation of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, and had been supported by all the legal authorities in the House of Lords. The Prime Minister's speech was as frank and manly on behalf of justice as the action of his government on the occasion. He had not based his proceeding, he said, on the legal doctrines or historical truths brought forward so abundantly in the debate. His feeling was that, if any legal doctrine existed by which chapels held by any class of Dissenters could be taken from them, and given away elsewhere, the first thing to be done was to amend such a legal rule.

Hansard, lxxv. 321, 324.

Hansard, lxxv. 383.

While the clamour was loud throughout the "religious world," as the petitioners called themselves, outside the walls of parliament, there was a remarkable preponderance of argument, ability, and political character, within the House in favour of the government Bill; a preponderance so remarkable as to be observed upon as unexampled by both Sir R. Peel and Lord J. Russell. The votes went with the argument, the majority for the third reading being 120 in a House of 282.—Some slight amendments having been made in committee, the Bill was returned to the Lords, when the Bishop of London made another effort to renew the dispute, on the ground that the House of Commons did not represent the religious opinion of the nation. He did not perceive the danger of his own blindness to the fact, that this was not a question of religious opinion, but of security of property—which no one could deny to be the proper business of the House of Commons. Though his endeavour to throw out the Bill was zealously supported by a few peers who shared the misconceptions prevalent out of doors, it was negatived by a majority of 161 in a House of 243; and the Bill presently became law. From this time, places of worship which were not by the terms of the trust destined unmistakeably for a particular sect, were to remain the property of the body which had held them for twenty preceding years: a settlement as conducive to social peace as consonant to justice. What the consequences would have been if the Bill had been surrendered to popular clamour, and a mass of dissenting property had been, in effect, thrown to the religious multitude to be scrambled for, in virtue of omissions and short-comings of the law, some of the speakers ventured to hint, but none professed to describe.

Hansard, lxxvi. 116.

Hansard, lxxvi. 820.

RELIEF TO JEWS.

Another act of the period, promotive of justice and of social peace, was the relief of Jews from municipal disabilities. This relief was the direct act of the government. The Lord Chancellor brought in a Bill, early in the session of 1845, for removing certain tests by which Jews were excluded from some municipal offices, while others remained open to them. Five Jewish gentlemen were at that time magistrates; some for several counties; some were deputy-lieutenants, and all might be high-sheriff. If they refused to serve the

1839—43. office of sheriff in London, they were subject to a fine: yet they were excluded from the office of alderman, (which is considered the compensation or reward for having discharged the onerous duties of the shrievalty,) by a clause in the declaration which could be subscribed to only by a Christian; this clause itself dating only from 1828. In some towns the disability was evaded by management and subterfuge; but this did not mend the case. It is scarcely credible how much could be found to be said against a relief so reasonable and necessary as the one proposed; but the measure was carried with ease, being, as a fanatical member of the Commons House observed, in a state of panic, "completely of a piece with several other measures which had passed the House during the last two sessions." The last two sessions had indeed proved that the existing Administration was inferior to none that had preceded it in its enlightened regard for religious liberty.

CHAPTER X.

1842—45.

CANADA CORN QUESTION.

YEAR by year the prospect was opening to the British nation of a sufficient supply of food; or, at least, of a supply not artificially restricted. The harvest of 1842 was abundant. The newspapers, during September of that year, tell of "immense quantities" of corn gathered in, and of a proportionate production on the continent: and in October, there was a special thanksgiving in all places of worship, throughout the kingdom. But there was an event of even happier promise than the abundant harvest. A letter from Lord Stanley to the Governor-General of Canada, dated in March of this year, shows that the earnest petitions of the Canadians for the free admission of their corn into Great Britain were favourably regarded by the government. The Colonial Secretary granted assent to all the pleas in favour of free trade between Canada and the mother country; but pointed out that unless Canada chose to impose a duty on the importation of wheat and flour from the United States, Great Britain would in fact be supplied from the United States, viâ Canada, and the British corn laws would become a mere sham. The Channel Islands had been all along permitted to send their agricultural produce free to England, with permission to buy for themselves wherever they could buy cheapest: but they owed this privilege to their small area of production; and the landed interest would not permit the extension of the liberty to so important a colony as Canada. Such were the explanations with which Lord Stanley accompanied his news that government was about to lower the duty on Canadian wheat, and to permit the importation of Canadian flour into Ireland.

Annual Register, 1842, p. 335.

The broad hint given in this letter was immediately taken. The Canadians saw that the government at home did not choose to impose new duties on United States' produce imported into Canada; but that, if the colony herself chose to do so, she might consider the British government pledged to admit her wheat and flour free, or under a merely nominal duty: and a law was passed by the Canadian legislature, without delay, by which American wheat was charged, from the 5th of July, 1843, with a duty of 3*s.* per quarter.

So far, all was easy. But the affair was no sooner known in England, than "the landed interest" became extremely restless and anxious. At market-tables, at agricultural meetings, and wherever landlords and farmers met, it was hinted or proclaimed that Ministers were about to let in foreign corn by a back-door, and to sink the corn laws into an empty name. County members were instructed to be on the watch, and to put no blind trust in the Ministry, till it was seen how this matter would end. The dissatisfaction was so strong as to make the Ministers regret, as the Colonial Secretary avowed, that they had no choice of time about introducing their plan to parliament. As their promise to Canada bound them to propose their resolutions as early as possible, Lord Stanley could only deprecate the agitation, and explain away as much as

Hansard, lxix. 577.

he could of the alarm. No wheat from the United States was to be admitted—only flour made from it; which was as truly a Canadian manufacture as ostrich feathers were a French manufacture. The Canadians might live on United States' wheat, and send us all theirs; but so they might, at any time for fifteen years—the only difference being that the duty was imposed now on the American frontier, instead of on our own shores. If we retained a duty of 1*s.* on Canadian wheat, and the Canadians paid a 3*s.* duty on United States' wheat, English wheat was still protected by a 4*s.* duty, which government believed would be an effectual protection. The change was proposed purely for the benefit of the Canadians, now settling down into a state of peaceful industry; and by no means for any advantage to the British consumer, as against the agriculturist at home. Though this was said very earnestly and ably, and though Lord Stanley had a high character as a protectionist, the British consumer did believe that he should be the better for the change, and the British farmer did fear that he should be driven into a competition with the Americans. The news, with its attendant surmises, crept through the land, kindling hopeful smiles beside many a loom, and within the walls of many a cottage in town and country; and calling up dread in the mind of many a farmer who pondered how he could pay his rent if he was to be undersold in a shabby way, by an act of the same government which had already altered the Sliding Scale in a spirit of favouritism to the consumer.

Confusion of Parties.

When Lord Stanley proposed his resolutions, he was opposed by some members of the liberal party on the ground that he was establishing a new protection in Canada, and supported by others on the ground that the Canadians should be allowed to obtain all the corn they could get. There is no doubt that many votes were secured to the government by the prevalent conviction of the danger of hurting and irritating the Canadians by annulling one of the first acts of their united legislature: and, if Lord Stanley's Resolutions had been rejected, the necessary consequence would have been the refusal of the Royal Assent to the Canadian Bill. The Resolutions were affirmed by a large majority. The debates in Committee were chiefly remarkable for a confusion of parties such as indicated to impartial persons that a crisis was approaching. As usually happens when such confusion of parties takes place, there was violent recrimination. The Anti-Corn-law Leaguers looked on with deep interest, and perceived that their cause was making rapid advances. In the Upper House, there were also opposite allegations against the measure. It introduced the practice of protection into the Colonies, and must therefore be opposed: and again, it must be opposed because it nullified the Protectionist arrangements of the preceding year. Lord Stanhope declared that these measures were only stepping stones to the general adoption of free-trade principles, which Ministers had consistently avowed; and others supported or denounced the measure as a recession from free-trade principles. Amidst these contradictions, the Colonial Secretary's Bill passed the stage of debate in the Lords by a majority of 32 in a House of 82, and became law without delay.

Hansard, lxix. 747.

Hansard, lxx. 578.

The Bill passed.

Hansard, lxx. 608

Corn-law Debates.

By this time, there were large numbers of persons in a state of hope or fear from the conviction that the existing government "had never attempted to conceal," as Lord Stanhope said, "their advance towards the full adoption of

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free-trade principles." Throughout the country, the preparations for the crisis were proceeding. Every parliamentary seat that became vacant was contested by the Corn-law repealers; and every word that fell from Ministers and their adherents in either House was watched and pondered. This state of expectation gave an interest to the Corn-law debates which would otherwise have been utterly wearisome, from the lack of novelty, and the preponderance of argument on one side. In March, Mr. Ward moved, unsuccessfully, for a Hansard, lxvii. 877. committee to inquire whether there were any peculiar burdens on land, and if so, what they were: and in May, Mr. Villiers brought forward his annual motion for a Committee of the whole House, to consider the operation of the corn-importation duties, with a view to their immediate abolition. The Hansard, lxix. 26—57. government declined further change while their last Slidingscale was new and untried; the Whig leaders and their adherents desired a fixed duty; and the Protectionists were awake and active in opposition to the motion, yet the majority by which it was rejected was much less than in the preceding year; the numbers being in 1842, 393 to 90; and now, 381 to 125. In 1844, the majority on the same occasion again sank to 204; and the Protectionists began Hansard, lxxv. 1549. to calculate how long their Corn law could be preserved if their majority continued to sink at the rate of 50 in a year. The Ministers, this time as before, said that their new scale was not yet proved a failure, and that, till it was, they would countenance no change. Sir R. Peel said that as he had before Hansard, lxxv. 1529. declared, so he would declare still, that the government had not contemplated, and did not now contemplate, any change in that Corn law which was settled two years since: but now, as before, he guarded himself against being understood to mean that he would at all times, and under all circumstances, resist change; because that was a thing which no man ought to say on any matter of the kind. Lord J. Russell declined voting, on the ground that he was equally unwilling to have things go on as they were, and to throw open the trade in corn. Adhering to his own proposal of a fixed duty of 8*s*. he would not vote for any alternative. He was deserted now, however, by Lord Howick, who avowed himself an advocate of immediate repeal, as compromise was no longer Hansard, lxxv. 1433—1451. possible. He saw that industry was inadequately rewarded—that both wages and profits were low—and that these results were mainly owing to restrictions on the importation of food. This was a remarkable fact; and there were other remarkable facts connected with this debate; but none of them, separately or collectively, were so notable as the line of defence taken by the Protectionists. Their speeches were almost wholly occupied by complaints or denunciations of the Anti-Corn-law League.

1841.

The change within three years was indeed great. On the 25th of August, 1841, after the general election, and a few days before the resignation of the Whig Cabinet, in the course of the debate on the Address, in answer to the Queen's Speech, the People's tale was for the first time fully and properly told in parliament. Mr. Cobden had been sent up to the House as representative Richard Cobden of the bread-winners of the kingdom; and, on the first occasion of his rising, he told the story in a way which fixed the attention of every thoughtful observer of the times. When the daily papers of the 26th of August had reached their destinations throughout the island, there were meditative students, anxious invalids in their sick-chambers, watchful philosophers, and

1842—45. a host of sufferers from want, who felt that a new era in the history of England had opened, now that the People's tale had at last been told in the People's House of Parliament. Such observers as these, and multitudes more, asked of all who could tell them who this Richard Cobden was, and what he was like: and the answer was that he was a member of a calico-printing firm in Manchester; that it was supposed that he would be an opulent man if he prosecuted business as men of business usually do; but that he gallantly sacrificed the pursuit of his own fortune, and his partners gallantly spared him to the public, for the sake of the great cause of Corn-law repeal—his experience, his liberal education, and his remarkable powers, all indicating him as a fitting leader in the enterprise. It was added that his countenance was grave, his manner simple and earnest, his eloquence plain, ready, and forcible, of a kind eminently suited to his time and his function, and wholly new in the House of Commons. It was at once remarked that he was not treated in the House with the courtesy usually accorded to a new member: and it was perceived that he did not need such observance. However agreeable it might have been to him, he did not expect it from an assemblage proud of "the proponderance of the landed interest" within it; and he could do without it. Some who had least knowledge of the operative classes, and the least sympathy for them, were touched by the simplicity and manliness with which the new member received the jeers which followed his detailed statements of the proportion of the bread duty paid by men who must support their families on 10*s.* a-week. Hansard, lix. 236, 240. "He did not know," he said, "whether it was the monstrous injustice of the case, or the humble individual who stated it, that excited this manifestation of feeling, but still, he did state that the nobleman's family paid to this bread-tax but one half-penny in every 100*l.* as income-tax, while the effect of the tax upon the labouring man's family was 20 per cent . . . . He had lately had an opportunity of seeing a report of the state of our labouring population in all parts of the country. Probably Honourable Gentlemen were aware that a very important meeting had been lately held at Manchester: he alluded to the meeting of ministers of religion. *(A laugh.)* He understood that laugh; but he should not pause in his statement of facts, but might perhaps notice it before concluding. He had seen a body of ministers of religion of all denominations—650 (and not thirty) in number—assembled from all parts of the country, at an expense of from three to four thousand pounds, paid by their congregations. At that meeting most important statements of facts were made relating to the condition of the labouring classes. He would not trouble the House by reading those statements; but they showed that in every district of the country . . . the condition of the great body of her Majesty's labouring population had deteriorated wofully within the last ten years, and more especially within the last three years; and that in proportion as the price of food increased, in the same proportion the comforts of the working classes had diminished. One word with respect to the manner in which his allusion to this meeting was received. He did not come there to vindicate the conduct of these Christian men in having assembled in order to take this subject into consideration. The parties who had to judge them were their own congregations. There were at that meeting members of the Established Church, of the Church of Rome, Independents, Baptists, members of the Church of Scotland, and of the Secession Church, Methodists, and indeed ministers of every other denomination; and if he were disposed to impugn the character of those divines, he felt he should be casting a stigma and a reproach upon the great body of professing Christians in this country. He happened to be the only member of the House present at that meeting; and he might be allowed to state that when he heard the tales of misery there described, when he heard these Ministers declare that members of their congregations were kept away from places of worship during the morning service, and only crept out under cover of the darkness of night—when they described others as unfit to receive spiritual consolation, because they were sunk so low in physical destitution—that the attendance at Sunday schools was falling off—when he heard these and such like statements—when he who believed that the Corn laws, the provision monopoly, was at the bottom of all that was endured, heard those statements, and from such authority, he must say that he rejoiced to see gentlemen of such character come forward, and like Nathan, when he addressed the owner of flocks and herds who had plundered the poor man of his only lamb, say unto the doer of injustice, whoever he might be, 'Thou art the man.' The people, through their Ministers, had protested against the Corn laws. Those laws had been tested by the immutable morality of Scripture. Those Reverend Gentlemen had prepared and signed a petition, in which they prayed the removal of those laws—laws which, they stated, violated the Scriptures, and prevented famishing children from having a portion of those fatherly bounties which were intended for all people; and he would remind Honourable Gentlemen that, besides these 650 ministers, there were 1500 others from whom letters had been received, offering up their prayers in their several localities to incline the will of Him who ruled princes and potentates to turn your hearts to justice and mercy. When they found so many ministers of religion, without any sectarian differences, joining heart and hand in a great cause, there could be no doubt of their earnestness..... Englishmen had a respect for rank, for wealth, perhaps too much; they felt an attachment to the laws of their country; but there was another attribute in the minds of Englishmen—there was a permanent veneration for sacred things; and where their sympathy and respect and deference were enlisted in what they believed to be a sacred cause, 'you and yours,' declared the speaker, addressing the protectionists, 'will vanish like chaff before the whirlwind.'" Much of this speech relating to the great meeting of religious ministers at Manchester, and its tone being determined accordingly, some of the laughing members of the House called Mr. Cobden a Methodist parson, and were astonished afterwards to find what his abilities were in widely different directions. Some regarded him as a pledged radical in politics, and were surprised to see him afterwards verifying the assurances he gave this night—that he belonged to no party, and, as a simple free-trader, would support either the Whigs or Sir R. Peel, whichever of them should go furthest in repealing the restrictions on food. Almost every body regarded him as a representative of the Manchester manufacturers, as an embodiment of cotton-spinning, and therefore as the sworn foe of the landed interest: but it appeared in due course that he was the son of a Sussex farmer; that he understood and had at heart the interests of agriculture; and that he could enlighten and guide and aid the farming class and their labourers

1842—45. far better than those who assumed to be their special friends and protectors. In proportion as Mr. Cobden's influence rose and spread in the League and in the country, the agitation against the Corn laws included more and more of the landed interest, and was less and less distinctive of the manufacturing districts and population. Meantime, from this 25th of August, 1841, there were members of the landed aristocracy who watched Mr. Cobden's course with an interest beyond that of curiosity, declaring that this, his first address to the House—an address which he supposed to be the simplest possible statement of a very simple matter—was "a *great* speech."

1843. The League.

By the spring of 1843, how changed was the tone of the House! There was no laughing now at or about the Lancashire leaguers: but instead, a rueful complaint from Mr. Bankes, as spokesman for "the landed interest," of their activity and power in the country. "As to matters affecting those who, like himself," said Mr. Bankes, "desired to live quietly and safely among their tenantry in the country, the Ministry had not the power of knowing, as he and other gentlemen in the country had, the enormous extent of mischief which might be produced—which was attempted to be produced—at this present time, by the emissaries of this League...... He had no reason to seek for any ministerial support in the county which he represented; but he looked to Ministers for the peace of his private life—for the comfort, happiness, and welfare, of the peasantry who lived around him. He looked to them to drive away, by some means or other, this new mode of sending emissaries throughout the country—paid emissaries; for such were avowed and boasted of by the Honourable Member for Stockport (Mr. Cobden). It was of this he complained; and it was from this he entreated the government to protect the country; as one of their fellow-citizens, as a faithful and dutiful subject of the Crown, he asked, he besought, he demanded, this at the hands of her Majesty's Ministers."

Hansard, lxvii. 912.

It need not be said that Mr. Bankes's demand was in vain. Ours is not a country, nor an age, in which government can stop inquiries into the rate of wages and the condition of the labourer, or interfere with the publication of the results. As is always the case when monopolies are about to be destroyed, the advocates of monopoly in this instance mistook the movement for an attack upon their fortunes, and an interference with their private affairs. The League leaders were always anxious to learn—ready to receive suggestions and instructions from their foes; and from this it was that their agents were abroad at this time, in the agricultural counties. At first, the movement was regarded as one of the manufacturers exclusively; and at first perhaps it was so. It was originated in Lancashire—its head-quarters were at Manchester—and its funds were mainly supplied by "the cotton lords" of the district. They were taunted with a sordid regard to their own interest, and charged with a desire to sacrifice the peasantry of the country to their own ends. Their daily-improving knowledge of the operation of the Corn laws was rapidly teaching them much more than they had ever dreamed of, of the fatal influence of those laws on the condition of the agricultural labourer: and they now resolved to ascertain the facts of the state of the peasantry in the southern counties, and to publish them, week by week, in their newspaper. Though they, and all other political economists knew, as

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the very alphabet of their science, that the employers of labour do not fix the wages of labour, they were aware that their opponents did not yet understand this; and they therefore lost no opportunity of saying every where, from the House of Commons down to the humblest open air gathering, that it was the Corn laws and other irresistible influences, and not the landowners, that made wages so low. Yet, every gentleman on the Protectionist side, whose labourers were starving on 7*s.* or 8*s.* per week, resented the publication of the fact, as an imputation on his humanity. It was not this that was the ground of imputation; but the carelessness, or prejudice, or neglect of duty, which made these gentry extol the condition of their wretched dependents, and resent all inquiry into it, and all efforts to improve it. There is material in that singular newspaper, the 'League,' which can be found no where else, for a history of the condition of the people prior to the release of agriculture from so-called Protection. Agents of good business-habits, knowledge, and power of observation, were sent on journeys through counties where they paused at every step, noted the condition of every field, fence, farm-yard, and cottage, for miles together; and the evidence thus afforded of bad tillage, and every kind of waste, of overweening rents, uncertain profits, and wages reduced below the point of possible maintenance, is such as a future generation could not believe, if offered in a less unquestionable form. On one nobleman's estate, the poor labourers were punished by being turned to road-labour for having answered the questions of a League agent, and admitted him into their hovels, where he noted the holes in the thatch, and the puddles in the floor, and witnessed the destitution of food. The League, from that moment, changed its method of procuring the same kind of information—publishing the fact that in no case detailed by them was the information obtained from the sufferers themselves; and on they went with their disclosures. The further they proceeded, the more they confirmed the statements of the 2000 ministers of religion who prayed in their churches and chapels for equal laws and daily bread for all.

But the League leaders not only sent agents through the agricultural districts: they went there themselves. As soon as the House rose, Mr. Cobden was down upon the southern and midland counties, holding meetings on market-days, and arguing the question against all comers with singular success. We find, in glancing over the newspapers of the time, that his opponents were usually elaborately prepared—their loudest speakers put forward—their resolutions or amendments well pondered—their posse of supporters well placed on the ground; but too often, we find them, when baffled, and perceiving the audience going against them, losing temper, seizing the waggons, or drowning the voices of the speakers by clamour. Rapidly, there was an accession of farmers to the League; and some of them became League speakers. More rapidly than ever before, intelligence began to spread among the dull and depressed labouring class. They found light cast upon their condition; they heard reasonings which they understood; they found that what they had suspected was really true—that their interests were not identical with those of the receivers of rent, though it was true that they ought to be. They understood that they and their employers, the farmers, were the "agricultural interest" which the League desired to restore to prosperity; and not the land-

1842—45. owners; the landowners being, as Mr. Cobden told them, no more agriculturists than shipowners were sailors. By means of exercising the minds of the labouring classes on affairs interesting to them, and within their comprehension, the League leaders did more for popular education than has, as yet, been achieved by any other means. A circumstance less worthy of note is that, as the weeks and months passed on, we see more and more of county magistrates, of landowners, of noblemen, and members of parliament, attending on the hustings, and joining their efforts with those of the League leaders. —And next, we arrive at notices of meetings of agricultural associations, and other bodies, where members of the government are found speaking. Their theme is always the backward state of agriculture, and the necessity of advancing it, in order to enable the country to produce its own food, and be independent of the foreigner. The hearers regularly appear anxious to be told about tenures—to know what their rulers thought about leases—about the security the tenant might hope for, if he should be willing to lay out capital in the improvement of his land: and as regularly they appear to have been disappointed. Amidst a great deal that is very interesting about draining and fencing, and an improved farming economy in every way, nothing seems to have been ever said about rents and leases. Yet, it was unwise to leave these topics to be dealt with exclusively by the League. It was natural that men should watch the movements of the Prime Minister in relation to such matters at such a time; and a speech of his at the Tamworth town-hall, at the meeting of a farmers' club, in October, 1843, was read and commented on all over the country. It spoke of leases. After urging on the farmers to improve their knowledge and skill, and offering to procure them means of information, Sir R. Peel avowed his willingness to grant leases to any tenant of his own who should desire one, and could show that he was able and willing to improve the land. The speech conveyed everywhere a strong impression that it was spoken with the earnestness belonging to a critical season; that the speaker believed the improvement of agriculture to be the only ground of hope of better times for the landed interests. But there was a paragraph at the end which fixed attention more than all the rest. The vicinity of Birmingham was pointed out as a capital advantage to the Leicestershire farmers, as affording a market for their produce; and nothing could be more clear than the assertion of the Prime Minister, that the interests of agriculture and manufactures are inseparably united, and that whatever supports the vigour of manufactures must open markets, and keep up the demand for agricultural produce. This doctrine is simple and clear enough; but it was then League doctrine, and absolutely opposite to that taken for granted by the Protectionists; and it excited a proportionate sensation when given forth by the head of the Administration.

Spectator, 1843, p. 1012.

A month after this, the League met in Manchester, to offer evidence of much-increased boldness and power. Last year, they had easily raised 50,000*l.*, to be employed in the diffusion of knowledge in relation to the corn laws: they now resolved to raise 100,000*l.*; and six persons stepped forwards instantly to offer 500*l.* each, and forty-two gave, on the spot, sums between that amount and 100*l.* Before the meeting closed, nearly 13,000*l.* were subscribed. The money was needed for other purposes than the diffusion of information.

Ibid. p. 1083

For five years, the League had petitioned the Sovereign and the parliament: and now they thought it time to address themselves to those who made the parliament. They turned to the electors, and pledged themselves to be present and active at every election, and to contest every borough, till a parliament should be obtained which should repeal the corn laws. They had good reason for confidence in this course; for they had just carried the City of London. Mr. Baring had been rejected for Mr. Pattison, the free-trade candidate; and an analysis of the votes had clearly shown that it was the casting vote of the League (between the Conservatives and the Whigs) which had decided the election. And herein lay another evidence of the readiness of the League to take advice from its enemies, and profit by their taunts. In parliament, from the time the League was first mentioned there, till the thing could be said no longer, we find speaker after speaker saying that the League had no influence in London, and could make no impression there. The League admitted to itself that it had far too little influence in London; and it resolved to try whether it could make an impression in that stronghold of monopoly. The West India interest was there: the Canada interest was there; and the Shipping interest, and every thing that shrank from thorough-going free trade. These made London very difficult to gain: but, till London was gained, the aim could not be accomplished.

LONDON ELECTION.

Associations were formed there, and district meetings held: but the area was too large to be conquered by such a method of attack. Weekly meetings of the aggregate London societies were held at the Crown and Anchor: but presently the Crown and Anchor would not hold half that came; and the remarkable step was taken of engaging Drury Lane theatre for the Wednesday evening meetings. The first was held there on the 15th of March, 1843. The tickets were all gone on the Tuesday afternoon; and the theatre was crowded in every part. Probably, London will never witness a stranger spectacle than that which might now, for above two years, be seen; of one or other of the great theatres crowded from the floor to the roof by a multitude who came, week by week, to hear, for many hours together, nothing but political economy, all bearing on one point—the repeal of an obnoxious law. The interest, the emotion, the passion, aroused and demonstrated equalled, and even transcended, all that had ever been manifested, when poetry, instead of dry science, occupied the scene. It is true, the speaking was most able and very various; and no deeper tragedies were ever presented there than some which were related as happening close at hand and every day, through an artificial restriction of food: but still, the audience went to hear political economy and statistics; and were so roused by appeals based on facts and figures that the cheering was at times almost maddening. None could mock and deride who had ever been there; but many did—even the Prime Minister himself—while the thing was new, and regarded as a clap-trap, instead of what it really was—the most effectual way of rapidly diffusing information, and exciting the spirit of enterprise needed for the proposed reform. The result appeared in the City election of the next November: and from that time, we read of fewer jests, and of more appeals to government to "put down the League." It is needless to say that an association organized to

Spectator, 1843, p. 246.

1842—45. obtain the repeal of an Act of Parliament, by means of a diffusion of information among electors especially, and every body else afterwards, could not be "put down:" and, from the time that the City of London elected a League candidate, and such landowners and agriculturists as Lord Fitzwilliam and Lord Spencer avowed themselves converts to League doctrines—all of which happened before the end of 1843—no Minister could listen for a moment to the frantic entreaties of the Protectionists that their enemy might be crushed before their eyes. Like Mr. Bankes, they "asked" they "besought," they "demanded," this of Ministers; but Ministers could only be silent, and leave the great Association to pursue its strictly legal course. And among the Leaguers might now be found a man whose name was enough to make the owners of property pause before they assailed the Association of which he had become a member. Mr. Samuel Jones Loyd, the banker, who had more interest in the security of property, and more knowledge how to secure it, than almost any other man in the City of London, had, in October, sent a letter to the League Council, in which he intimated that he felt it right to overcome his reluctance to join any public body for whose acts he could not be responsible: "The time is now arrived," he wrote, "when this must be over-ruled by other considerations of overwhelming importance. The great question of free trade is now fairly at issue; and the bold, manly and effectual efforts which have been made by the League in its support command at once my admiration and my concurrence."

Spectator, 1843, p. 986.

Anecdotes.

An incident is related in the Chronicles of the year which, as it strongly excited curiosity within the Cabinet, as well as elsewhere, may be hoped to have led to some consideration of the effect upon conscience of laws too bad to be observed. Under the head "Remarkable case of Conscience," we find that a man who had given in an honest return of the profits of his regular business, in paying his income tax, had become conscience-stricken afterwards at having paid no tax on his income from smuggling; and that he therefore sent to the Chancellor of the Exchequer 14,000*l.* as due on three years' profits. There is no appearance of his having any pain of conscience about smuggling, even to the enormous amount thus indicated, while so sensitive about paying a tax of which his mind approved. The most searching inquiries failed to discover who was the owner of a conscience in so instructive a condition: and the Ministers were left with a lesson which some of them were beginning hardly to need.—A more trifling anecdote evidences the feverishness of the time about the opinions of the Premier on trade in corn. A Manchester manufacturer sent to Sir R. Peel two pieces of velveteen of a new and beautiful fabric, the device on which was "a stalk and ear of wheat, grouped, or rather thrown together very tastefully, with a small scroll peeping from beneath, bearing the word 'free.'" Sir R. Peel sent "a handsome letter" of thanks and acceptance. 'The Times' related the transaction: the 'Standard' did the same, omitting all about the wheat ears and the scroll. The 'Morning Post' was scandalized at both, and the Minister's acceptance of the gift. The quarrel attracted the Minister's eye afresh to the velveteen, when he saw the scroll, and immediately returned the present, with an explanation that he had been unaware that "any matters which were the subject of public controversy" were concerned in the transaction. The manufacturer, on his part,

Annual Register, 1843, Chron. 53.

Spectator, 1843, pp. 6, 30.

disclaimed any intention of embarrassing the Minister, and published the correspondence, to allay the jealousy which had been excited.

1844. League Registration.

In 1844, the efforts of the League became more distasteful than ever to their opponents. They took the registration in hand; and were soon able to give a precise account of 140 boroughs. No one could reasonably object to this part of the enterprise, as it was a method open to every party. It was made known to the hearers at the League meetings that there was no occasion ever to despair of the regeneration of any borough; and that it would be wrong to regard any as in a fixed condition of opinion. The constituency was renewed at the rate of from 10 to 15 per cent. annually, and was wholly changed in ten years. There was, therefore, every encouragement to strive to enlighten and inspirit the constituencies. It was by this time certain that a great accession of free-traders would be found in the House after the next election; and this, joined to the fact of the great changes within the House, shown by the decrease of the majorities against Mr. Villiers's annual motion, indicated that the final struggle could not be very far off. But prospects of infinitely greater importance were now opening—prospects of such vastness that the Leaguers themselves did not (as they have since said) by any means perceive the extent of their new enterprise. Their study of the boroughs led them to the contemplation of the counties, where their foes' chief strength lay; and that contemplation led Mr. Cobden to the discovery of a remedy for the false representation, or the non-representation of the bulk of the nation, by which the polity of Great Britain will be affected, probably down to the remotest posterity.

Freehold Land Scheme.

The operation of the Reform Bill was injured, and well nigh ruined, by the Chandos clause. By this clause, which favoured the landowners by admitting their tenants-at-will on easy terms to the franchise, a great number of votes could be fabricated, by the putting together many partners in a tenancy-at-will. Brothers, sons, uncles, and every kind of relative, were made partners, and had votes under this clause: and thus, in the agricultural districts, the voters were one in twenty-two; and "the landed interest" gained the counties, while in the manufacturing districts of Lancashire, the voters were only one in eighty of the inhabitants. In West Surrey, the voters were one to 26: and in Middlesex, one to 115. In considering how to lessen this prodigious inequality, and give a fair share of the representation to South Lancashire and the manufacturing districts of Yorkshire, Mr. Cobden found that the requisite power lay in the Reform Bill itself—in the Forty-shilling freehold clause. Upon inquiry, it appeared that a house, the possession of which would confer the franchise, might be had for from 30*l.* to 40*l.*: and it was clear that a world of difficulty and expense might be saved by the League undertaking all the part of the business which the artisan can least manage for himself. If the League opened books for the registration of land and houses on sale, surveyed the property, prepared the conveyance deeds, and, in short, left to the purchaser nothing to do but to choose his property, pay for it, and take possession, there could be no doubt of the readiness of a host of artisans and operatives to invest their savings in this secure and honourable kind of property, rather than in any other mode. The plan was immediately set on foot: and before the year was out, the spectacle might be seen, so ardently desired by many philanthropists, of numbers of the working class in possession of a plot of land and a house of

1842—45. their own;—having, as conservative politicians have been wont to say, "a stake in the country." It was well to provide for coming county elections; it was well to neutralize the vicious operation of the Chandos clause: but it was a far greater thing to have recurred to the benefit of making our working classes citizens indeed by giving them the power of holding house or land by means of their own earnings: and to do this by a method suited to the time, and to the existing state of our civilization—not by tempting them to depend on the land for subsistence; but only as an investment for their savings, after maintaining themselves by the species of labour which the time requires. A natural apprehension was widely expressed at first that the landowners would cut up their estates, as the Irish landlords had formerly done, and that the county constituencies would thus become depraved by the admission of mere creatures of the proprietors to the suffrage: but, as Mr. Villiers was at pains to explain, it was now too late for this to be done to any great extent. The landowners had already done their utmost; and in a very large proportion of cases, the land which was nominally their own was not really so. They had worked the Chandos clause of the Reform Bill to the utmost; and now they must leave to others the working of the Forty-shilling freehold clause. The event, as far as it can be judged of at this day, seems to have proved that the Leaguers were right. They soon turned the scale in some of the counties; and the operation has been continued, with still increasing vigour, to this hour. The working men of the Midland Counties, who had nothing to do with the League in its day, have learned from it to invest their savings in the best way, and obtain political privileges at the same time; and the prodigious extent of their associations for the purpose enables them to conduct the business, and acquire their freeholds, at a less cost than Mr. Cobden himself could have dreamed of when he propounded his plan. Freeholds are now obtained by thousands at the rate of 19*l.* each: and the working men of the midland towns who can invest this sum from their earnings, to obtain political privileges, are a class of the constituency that every true statesman and lover of his country will welcome to the exercise of their rights.

The Game Laws.

In the course of their inquiries and action, the Leaguers discovered that the Game laws were of more importance, and more deadly injury, than even the best-informed of them had been at all aware. They found that the law, which bears an appearance of impartiality—the law that the game on any land is the property of the occupier, unless he chooses to part with it—is utterly unavailing under the existing competition for farms. The competing farmers allowed the landlords to make any arrangement they pleased about the game, hoping that the hares and pheasants would, according to the promise of the landlord, not be allowed to increase to an injurious extent: a trust which was almost invariably found to be misplaced. The distress from this cause which came to their knowledge;—the discovery that throughout the agricultural counties the expenditure of the peasantry was certainly larger than their apparent receipts, indicating a prevalence of poaching;—the spectacle of jails over-crowded with prisoners, of whom the largest proportion were there for game offences;—and the actual sight of hundreds of acres of produce destroyed by game;—these things pointed out the Game laws as a subject of attack to the League; and Mr. Bright obtained, in 1845, a Committee which 1845.

sat in two sessions. The sporting interest is too strong in parliament to permit the due results to follow from the evidence obtained: but the information was not lost. Its purport was terrible beyond all expectation. It told that the direct waste of food through the ravages of game was equal in amount to the Income tax. It told of distress caused to the farmers in all degrees, from an irritating diminution of profits down to causing utter ruin, as in the case of an honest farmer (an example of a common case), who was thus reduced, in spite of the most strenuous efforts, from being a capitalist, down, by mournful degrees, to the station of a labourer at 10*s*. a week. It told of oppression on the part of sporting magistrates, and of unlimited opportunity for such oppression. It told of fearful demoralization in town as well as country, from the transactions connected with the sale of game. It told of the rousing of social and political discontents, in places where the hungering poor saw how much human food was devoured by hares and birds, and who felt how irreconcileable were the interests ot the peasantry and the magistracy in regard to game. There was no need that it should tell of murders; for the newspapers of the day made known that part of the horror of the case. In January, 1844, a gamekeeper of Lord Grantley's, the father of seven children, was found murdered by poachers. In March, a man named Lowther had a double certificate fine upon him, and thought, in his difficulty, of taking some of Lord Normanby's pheasants, wherewith to pay his fine. Being met, he shot Lord Normanby's keeper: and being tried, he was found guilty of murder. But these, and all lesser cases of injury, were unhappily of too common an order to produce much effect on the public mind. The event of the year, in regard to game catastrophes, was one which found its way to the hearts, and troubled the minds, even of some parliamentary sportsmen. The Earl of Stradbroke was well known as a strict game-preserver; and his conspicuous advocacy of all stringent game-law provisions in the House of Lords prevented any mistake about his views. We find him, in June of this year, urging amendments on the Bill for the Preservation of Game by night—provisions for making more stringent a law already intolerably oppressive; and in August, the kingdom was shocked by the news that two of Lord Stradbroke's gamekeepers had committed suicide, on two successive days. From the evidence on the inquest it appeared that the poachers had done much mischief in the preserves, and that Easy, the first suicide, fell into despondency, on hearing that Lord Stradbroke was coming down for the 1st of September. On the eve of that day, he shot himself through the mouth. The superintendent keeper, Cucksey, was supposed to take alarm lest he should be discovered to have removed pheasants' eggs from Easy's portion of the preserves, to make a better appearance in his own; and he shot himself the next day. Some little difference of tone is to be observed among legislators after this occurrence; a somewhat less stern assertion that the game was theirs, and that they would do what they chose with their own;—a somewhat less virulent denunciation of the peasantry for helping themselves to wild creatures which they can never be made to regard as property, and for yielding to a temptation too strong for flesh and blood.—For some time past, it had been rumoured that the Home Secretary was looking closely into the commitments for poaching

Annual Register, 1844. Chron. 4.

Ibid. Chron. 51.

Hansard, lxxv. 145.

Spectator, 1844, p. 848.

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offences, all over the country, to ascertain their legality; and some persons even ventured to anticipate a proposal from the government for the complete revision of the game laws.—In August, we find Lord Lilford saying in the Upper House that much observation had been occasioned by the Home Secretary having required from the governor of Northampton jail a return of summary convictions under the Game Act in that county; and Lord Lilford inquired of Lord Wharncliffe whether it was intended to cast any imputation on the magistrates of the shire. The reply was that every county had been visited with the same requisition, because it was known to government that great irregularities had occurred in the management of such cases. The evidence of the Under Secretary for the Home Department, before Mr. Bright's Committee in the next spring, disclosed such abundant reason for this inquiry that we do not wonder at hearing of no more resentment on behalf of magistrates. So many of the mere commitments were illegal that the Home Secretary made a jail-delivery of game offenders, extensive enough to render it prudent for the magistrates and their champions to drop the subject. Whenever the administration of justice in rural districts becomes a subject for legislation, as Municipal Reform has been in our time, the evidence of Mr. S. March Phillips, Under Secretary for the Home Department, before Mr. Bright's Game Law Committee, will suffice to show what that administration was up to 1845.

Hansard, lxxvi. 1642.

In the same August which brought the subject of the Game laws so often before the public, the 'Morning Herald' announced that Ministers were fully aware of the pernicious operation of the Game laws, and were contemplating a complete revision and large modification of them. It declared that the Home Secretary had kept a vigilant eye on the rural magistracy, ever since his entrance upon office, and had investigated every case of alleged severity; and it intimated that another session would hardly pass without a change of system. The next session brought about no change; nor has any subsequent session; except that hares are now deprived of some of the protection of sacred game. But public opinion has effected something of what legislation should long ago have done. Several noblemen and gentlemen—and in the first rank of these, the Duke of Bedford—have thrown open their preserves; and many more have given permission to their tenants to destroy hares and rabbits to any amount they please. A strong feeling of disgust at battue-shooting is spreading through all ranks, till, we may hope, it must reach the highest: and when battue-shooting comes to an end, the overthrow of the game law tyranny is nigh. The genuine game law system, derived from feudal times, and endeared to the aristocracy by feudal associations, was destroyed by the Act which legalized the sale of game. The sport, thus degenerated into preserving game for battue-shooting, cannot long hold its ground against the indignities which now beset it, the wrongs of a suffering peasantry, and the spirit of agricultural improvement. Already our sportsmen are finding their way to the wilds of Norway and other countries, in pursuit of a truer sport than any that can now be procured at home. The Scotch moors also will be open for a long time to come. With these sporting fields elsewhere, and the example of such landlords as the Duke of Bedford at hand, we may hope that the gentry who uphold in parliament a game law which must make every statesman blush will grow ashamed of insisting on their privilege and amusement, at the expense of ruin to the farmers, and corruption among the peasantry.

Political Dictionary, ii. p. 54.

Between 1833 and 1844, there were 41 inquests on slain gamekeepers; and in 26 of these cases, verdicts of wilful murder were returned. In some of the rural counties, nearly half of the total commitments to jail were game cases; and the maintenance of the families of poachers, and the necessary enlargements of the jails, and employment of a numerous police, were heavy burdens to the occupiers of land—already much injured by the partial destruction of their crops. The convictions in England and Wales for breach of the game laws for the year 1843 alone were 4,529. It is computed that the expenditure occasioned by the game laws (independent of the waste of food) amounts to more than that of the poor law system. "Within the last fifty years," says our calm and judicial-minded expositor of the Political Dictionary, "game has been preserved to an excess which was previously unknown. Most of the laws relating to game which have been passed within this period have been to enable game preservers to indulge in this taste; and to visit with greater severity those who are tempted by the abundance of game to become poachers. The accumulation of game in preserves, watched and guarded by numerous keepers, has led to changes in the mode of sporting. The sportsman of the old school was contented with a little spoil, but found enjoyment in healthful recreation and exercise, and was aided by the sagacity of his dogs. In the modern system of battue-shooting, the woods and plantations are beaten by men and boys; attendants load the sportsmen's guns, and the game is driven within reach of gunshot, and many hundred heads of game are slaughtered in a few hours. The true sportsman would as soon think of spoiling a poultry yard. . . . . The effect of protecting game by oppressive laws is, perhaps, more injurious to the morals of the rural population than any other single cause. The gentry of England are distinguished by many good qualities; but the manner in which many of them uphold their amusements at the cost of filling the jails with their poor neighbours, who acquire those habits which lead to the ruin of themselves and their families, is a blot on their character which has yet to be wiped off." We must leave it to a future historian to assign the date of its obliteration.

CHAPTER XI.

1843-44. FINANCIAL STATEMENT.

THE financial statement for 1843 was looked for with some dread by all parties. It could not be otherwise than unfavourable. The long distress was not yet over; the Income tax could have yielded nothing yet; and the prodigious reduction of Import duties consequent on the alteration of the tariff must have operated immediately, and presented its worst aspect first.

Hansard, lxviii. 1391.

On the 8th of May, Mr. Goulburn made his statement. Under some heads, there had been disappointment. Others indicated an improvement in manufactures and in the condition of the people. The deficiency was about 2,000,000*l.*: but the Income tax was certain to be more productive than had been supposed. The net revenue from it was likely to be about 5,100,000*l.* On the whole, a small deficiency was left: but it was so evident that the worst was over with the Customs, and that the produce of that department must increase as the benefits of a free trade were experienced, that the surplus of a future time might be confidently reckoned on to pay up the present small deficiency. Two heavy charges of unusual character—for Opium compensation, and to reimburse the East India Company for the Chinese War—might be paid out of the Chinese money to come in hereafter: but meantime, the sums must be advanced. No remission of taxation could be looked for under these circumstances; and the most vehement objectors to the Income tax had now nothing to say when asked what we should have done without it. The deficiency was owing chiefly to a falling off in the wine, spirits, and malt duties, from causes which could not have been anticipated—the expiration of the Methuen treaty with Portugal, the spread of the Temperance movement, and the badness of the malting season. One free trade deed was done by Parliament, this session, at the instance of Ministers. The law was repealed which prohibited the exportation of Machinery. This law had long been practically inoperative; as there is no machinery which cannot be sent abroad in portions under cover: and the only effect of the law, of late years, had been to make British machinery dearer on the continent than it need be, so as to enable the Belgian manufacturers to undersell the English. The English would henceforth have a fairer chance.

Hansard, lxxi. 547.

1844. FINANCIAL STATEMENT. Hansard, lxxiv. 361—385.

The financial statement of 1844 showed that the Minister had been quite right in anticipating a revival of prosperity, and a surplus, larger or smaller. The surplus was large beyond every one's expectation, amounting to 2,700,000*l.* It was clear that the Distress was over for this time, and that all the great interests of the country were rapidly rising. The Chancellor of the Exchequer was pressed with proposals on every hand for the reduction of taxes: but he had to consider that the Income tax was, as yet, the only resource to fall back upon; and that its continuance beyond the next year had still to be debated. Bearing this in mind, he was disposed to apply the present surplus to the augmentation of the balance in the Exchequer, only remitting duties on a few articles to the extent of 387,000*l.* a year. Some amendments on Mr. Goulburn's proposals were moved, but not carried. The great conflict of parties was on the Sugar duties; and the struggle was, this year, a remarkable one; and no less beneficial than remarkable in one of its consequences—proving the strictness of principle and clear insight of the League leaders.

SUGAR DUTIES.

Year by year, the free trade party in the House of Commons protested against the preference shown to colonial above foreign sugars: and Mr. Cobden moved a Resolution, in June 1843, against the differential Sugar duty. The state of the revenue at that time furnished Mr. Goulburn with a sufficient plea for not then altering the duties; and he did not conceal that he was glad to avoid the risk of letting in slave-grown produce by a reduction of duty on foreign sugars. In the present year, however, the plea of a deficient revenue was taken away; and not only so; but the improved condition and habits of the people, who were becoming consumers of tea and coffee at a perpetually increasing rate, required, Mr. Goulburn said, that provision should be made for a larger supply of sugar. Before negro emancipation, our West India colonies produced about one-third more sugar than was wanted at home: but after that date, while the production had diminished, the demand had largely increased. Some of the need had been supplied by parliament having brought East and West India sugars nearer, in regard to duty: but the price had risen 2*s.* per cwt. in the year that was gone; and the demand was certain still to increase. While the Legislature was about the work of altering the duties, it might as well provide some surplus of supply for a future rise of demand. Mr. Goulburn proposed to do this in a way which, as government believed, would reconcile an enlargement of the supply of sugar with fidelity to their anti-slavery principles. He brought forward two Resolutions, by which, first, Sugar certified to be the growth of China, Java, Manilla, or other countries where no slave-labour was employed, should be admitted at a duty of 34*s.*, the colonial duty remaining as before at 24*s.*; and, secondly, the Queen should be authorized, at the same date, to proceed upon any existing treaties by which she was bound to admit the sugars of any foreign country on the same footing as that of the most favoured nation. This resolution related to Brazil, whose treaty with us would expire at that date.

Hansard, lxxv. 154—183.

By these propositions, the government separated itself from both the parties regularly opposed to each other on the sugar question—the West India interest and the free-traders: and hard work it was for Mr. Goulburn to maintain any thing like a secure footing between them. The West India interest pleaded, as usual, the peculiarity and hardship of their case as a reason against any enlargement of the area of supply. They considered themselves entitled to the benefit of any rise of price that might take place from the increased demand. The free-traders pointed out that, as our consumption increased, slave-grown sugar would find its way somewhere—if not to us, to the countries that supplied us; and that our discountenance of slave-grown sugar would thus be reduced to a mere sham. Lord John Russell's amendment in favour of admitting all foreign sugars at 34*s.* was rejected by a majority of 69; and Mr. Goulburn brought in his Bill, which was read twice without debate. The 14th of June was the day when the House went into

Hansard, lxxv. 219.

1843-44.

Mr. Miles's Motion.
Hansard, lxxv. 920.

Committee upon it. On that day, Mr. Miles moved as it had been decided by the West India body in the City that he should. There had been a meeting of that body in the morning; and they had agreed that Mr. Miles should propose a lowering of the duty on Colonial and East India Sugar to 20*s.* instead of the 24*s.* proposed by government; and the raising of the duty on "White Clayed, or equivalent to white clayed" (partially refined) Sugar of foreign free-labour production, to 34*s.*—the duty on brown or clayed being 30*s.* Mr. Goulburn objected that the leaving a differential duty of 10*s.* gave only precisely the same protection to colonial interest as he had proposed, while the loss of the 4*s.* on each sort would make a disastrous difference to the revenue. Not a few free-traders were caught by the temptation of an apparent reduction of 4*s.* on Colonial Sugars: but the better men-of-business of that party saw that Mr. Miles's proposition, if carried, would in effect merely establish a differential duty of 14*s.* between Colonial and other sugar; put the 4*s.* per cwt. into the pockets of the West India planters; and cause a serious diminution in the revenue. They would not countenance this; nor express any such acquiescence in any differential duty. They would rather wait till the next year, when the whole subject must come under revision and re-arrangement, and when their present resistance to the bait of the Protectionists would give them a title to deference. Other people, however, were less clear-sighted or less virtuous. It was evident that here was an opportunity for trying with advantage whether the government could not be upset. Lord John Russell with his whig tail went out into the lobby mixed up with Lord John Manners and his "Young England,"—a good many wondering free-traders swelling the numbers. These free-traders wondered to find themselves in such company, and yet, to think that they should have left Cobden and Ricardo, and Thornely and Warburton, behind. By means of this curious coalition and confusion, Ministers were outvoted by a majority of 20. Mr. Cobden and the League immediately lost much popularity. It was only for a short time, and with people who could not see why he should prefer a duty of 24*s.* to one of 20*s.*, or why he should refuse his help towards overthrowing the Administration, to bring in Lord J. Russell, with his 8*s.* fixed corn duty. But it soon came to be understood, first, that Mr. Cobden and the League were sincere in their constant disclaimer of party purposes and party temper: and next, that the restoration of the Whigs to power could have brought us no nearer to free trade. The Whigs could not have held power for many days at that time: the existing government had a majority of 90 on all party divisions; and there could be no question among political economists, of Peel and his comrades understanding free trade better than the Whigs, as well as being more able to give it. When these things became clear, Mr. Cobden and the League stood higher than ever.

Hansard, lxxv. 968.

It was on a Friday night, or rather, Saturday morning, that the important division took place, which gave a majority of 20 against Ministers. On Sunday morning, a Cabinet Council was held; and at its close, Sir R. Peel went to Buckingham palace, where he was detained to dinner. It was every where rumoured that the Queen, then near her confinement, was strongly opposed to his resigning. On Monday, there was another Cabinet Council, while people out of doors were settling whether the Minister would go out, or would propose, as the Whigs had done, under a much more significant discomfiture, the continuance of the existing sugar duties for another year. All day, lists of new ministries were made out, to pass the time till evening; and every conservative who left his card at Sir R. Peel's door was noted and reported. The house was very full—many sick members having made an effort to come. It was evident that all parties had mustered their forces diligently. A dead silence prevailed when the Premier rose to speak. His speech could hardly be an effective one, or delivered in his best manner, on an occasion so mortifying, and a subject so perplexed, and implicating so much unsoundness. He neither offered to retire, nor proposed the continuance of the existing sugar duties. He declared his intention of adhering to the ministerial measure, exposed the difficulty of arranging the processes of government in regard to the sugar duties, from the fact that the existing treaty with Brazil would expire on the 10th of November next, after which that country must be admitted on the same footing as the most favoured nation; while the expiration of the existing duties rendered it impossible to wait, and every one knew that the whole subject must undergo revision in the next session before it could be determined whether or not to renew the Income tax. The rival motion was not one of opposition of principle: it only proposed different amounts, and not a different proportion of duty; and there would therefore be no disgrace to the House if, on surveying the peculiarities of the case, it should reconsider its vote. If parliament had confidence enough in the existing administration to countenance and support its general principle of relaxing duties in ways which appeared safe and gradual, it might be expected not to thwart the government in regard to details of particular measures; and on this ground he asked for a reconsideration of the late embarrassing vote. This was granted him. In a Committee of 488, Mr. Miles's proposition was rejected by a majority of 22. Two lasting consequences of this speech and division were, that the extreme Protectionists from that day drew off from Sir R. Peel, and hoped nothing more from him; and that his followers saw that there must be no faltering among them. The Minister had a policy in view, clear and well-defined; and he must carry it through, without being subject to misadventures through any instability of theirs. Now had been the moment for deciding whether he should be authorized to carry out his policy. It had been decided that he was: and now, they were to support him without flinching or vacillation. The next year must be a great one, in regard to affairs of Commerce and Finance; and this was the preparation for it. The Ministerial Bill, after some further discussion in both Houses, stopping short of the point of endangering it, became law on the 4th of July.

Hansard lxxv. 987—1012.

Hansard, lxxv. 1082.

Hansard, lxxvi. 294.

REDUCTION OF THE 3½ PER CENTS.

As the prosperity of the kingdom advanced, and capital abounded, and the price of Stocks rose, the holders of the 3½ per cent. consols became aware that they might soon expect to hear of a government plan for the reduction in that Stock. Every body said that such a reduction was a fair and proper means of diminishing the burdens of the country—the interest of capital being now very low, and likely to remain so. The anxiety was as to how it would be done. Mr. Goulburn brought forward his plan on the 8th of March, 1844. The occasion was an important one; for the sum to be dealt with was larger

1843-44. than had ever before been taken in hand for regulation by the government, being little less than 250,000,000*l.* of money. The plan of the Chancellor was received with the utmost good-will and satisfaction; and no difficulty subsequently occurred. He proposed to deal with all the Stock now comprehended under the 3½ per cent., except that constituted in 1818, which enjoyed some peculiar protections originally guaranteed to it. With regard to all but this, he proposed that the 3½ should be exchanged for 3¼ per cent. for 10 years; and be reduced to 3 per cent. in 1854, being guaranteed against any further reduction for twenty years from that date. By this plan, the immediate saving would be 625,000*l.* per annum for ten years; and after that, 1,250,000*l.* per annum. The time allowed for dissent on the part of the holders was a fortnight for persons in England, three months for persons on the Continent, and eleven months for every body further off. The speech of the Chancellor of the Exchequer was cheered at intervals as it proceeded, and vehemently at the end; and a variety of speakers offered him compliments and congratulations afterwards. The resolutions proposed were passed unanimously, and the Bill founded on them left the Lords on the 19th of the same month. The dissentients were extremely few, and the affair went off with unexampled smoothness. Mr. Goulburn took advantage of the occasion to remedy the inequality of payments in the different quarters of the year. All the interest due on the 3½ per cents. would be paid up to the 10th of October; so that a new start would be made from that day, and a nearly equal issue would be made in the summer and winter, as in the spring and autumn quarters—to the easing of currency and commerce.—The reason of the fervour with which the plan was hailed was that Mr. Goulburn had resisted the temptation of adding to the debt while obtaining present relief. He might have made a grander looking measure by increasing the burdens of posterity: but the scheme he proposed would benefit a future, even more than the present generation: and generous acknowledgments of this merit were made on every hand.

Hansard lxxiii. 729—748.

Bank Act of 1844.

It will be remembered that when a new Charter was granted to the Bank of England in 1833, it was provided that, though it was a Charter for twenty-one years, it might be modified at the end of ten years, on six months' notice being given by parliament. The ten years were now (in 1844) about to expire; and it was the Minister's desire that the Charter should be modified. It was the desire of the country at large that changes should be made; for the last few years had wrought deeply on the public mind in regard to currency matters. The fever of Joint Stock Bank speculation had subsided. Opinions of Mr. S. Jones Loyd and Mr. Norman, opinions clearly propounded before a parliamentary committee in 1840, in favour of a single source of issue of money, had become widely known, and intelligently embraced by a large majority of thinking persons: while, on the other hand, an extensive agitation had gone forward in favour of such an "expansion of the currency" in all times of pressure as might buy off the pressure, and spread ease through the field of commerce. The intricate and abstract subject of currency had become so interesting to the many, that pamphlets advocating every view appeared in abundance; and not a few, both of the wise and the foolish, went through several editions. It is easy to understand how some of the most unwise became the most popular. When the small traders and artisans of the great towns were told that trade was always good when paper money abounded, that a new issue of paper money had relieved commercial distress as often as it had been tried, and that hardship and misery always attended a contraction of the currency, it was not surprising that they should read with avidity publications which described the bliss of an abundance of money, and partly consoled them for past misfortunes by appearing to point out the cause of them. Publications more intelligent and more intelligible were read as eagerly as any novel by men of business who were aware that the wisest of us have only too little knowledge and insight on a subject of central interest and importance—a subject on which every man of business would gladly have a clear opinion if he could.—On the whole, though the confusion of views was great, and the stragglers were so many as almost to defy classification, it may be said that there were three parties awaiting the exposition of the Minister's views on Currency and Banking in 1844;—the advocates of an inconvertible currency—of a paper circulation open to all comers whenever desired;—the advocates of a legal declaration that paper money was convertible, without other safeguard than legal penalties in case of mischievous transgression;—and the advocates of a real security for such convertibility—security in the form of precious metal actually laid by under the same roof from which its representative bank note goes forth. This last party were pretty generally aware beforehand that Sir R. Peel was about to declare in their favour, and that his measure would appear to be nearly what would have been recommended by Mr. Loyd and Mr. Norman. The country bankers were so alarmed lest their privileges should be interfered with, that they held meetings and issued warnings, and strove to interest members of parliament in their case, that any proposal of restricting issues to a single body might be resisted at once. But their apprehensions on this point were premature. The Minister believed that he could secure his end without going so far at present. All existing issues were to be allowed to go on; but no additions or successors were to be permitted. When this was once understood, the Minister was able to obtain a more patient hearing for his scheme. It was on the 6th of May that he made his exposition, in a lucid and interesting speech of three hours long. It was received, not only with the deference commanded by the supremacy of the speaker on financial subjects, but with much complacency, on account of the simplicity of the plan which was to effect changes of deep import without any of that monetary disturbance which had been dreaded as unavoidable. Men would have submitted to much in the hope of securing a sound system; but to have an apparently sound system offered to them, unaccompanied by temporary mischief, was beyond their hopes; and they were gracious accordingly. Their apprehensions never, however, had gone so far as to affect the price of Stocks—the funds standing precisely the same the day before and the day after the delivery of Sir R. Peel's speech.

Hansard, lxxiv. 720—755.

Spectator, 1844, p. 445.

The view which can be taken here is briefly this:—

SUBSTANCE OF THE BILL.

If our commercial transactions were all confined within our own island, we should want no other basis for our paper circulation than national securities, such as Stock and Exchequer Bills. The amount in circulation on these securities was supposed to be, as Sir R. Peel declared, about 22,000,000*l.* The issue of these 22,000,000*l.* was proposed to be divided between the Bank

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of England and the country banks in the proportion of 14,000,000*l.* by the Bank of England, and 8,000,000*l.* by the country banks; such issue being upon other security than gold, as it was most improbable that gold would ever be demanded for notes so issued.—But the circulation of the country is not 22,000,000*l.* but 30,000,000*l.*: and this last item of 8,000,000*l.* is the difficulty to be dealt with. It is the portion of our currency which is or may be concerned in our foreign commerce—in a department where our national securities are of no use, and a security must be provided which is of universal value—*i. e.* gold. The gold wanted for the conduct of affairs in connexion with foreign trade was assumed to be, at the utmost, 8,000,000*l.*; for before any thing like that quantity could have been drained out of the country, prices would have fallen so low as to induce a large exportation of goods, and the return of the gold. It was now provided that gold should always be in store to the amount of all paper issues beyond the 22,000,000*l.* based on national securities; and there could be no fluctuation in the amount of paper money, otherwise than in proportion to the gold offered to the Bank of England. The Bank was bound to buy with its notes all the bullion that was brought, at a trifle below Mint price. Thus, the gold brought in would surely be replaced by an equal amount of paper. When gold was, on the other hand, drawn out, the paper that came in was to be cancelled—a new safeguard, and a most necessary one, as the Bank had, up to this time, often reissued immediately the notes brought in, thus providing for a further drain of its gold at the very moment that it was draining out of itself.—In case of Joint-Stock or other country banks closing from any cause, it was provided that government might authorize the Bank of England to issue, on securities, notes to the same amount as the closed bank had out, the expense and possible profit of the transaction being set down to the public.

Probable Effects. Mill's Prin. of Polit. Econ. ii. 199 —202.

The hope from this scheme was that a perfect correspondence between paper issues and securities would be established. But there is an element involved in the case which introduces some confusion—the deposits in the hands of bankers. In quiescent times, the correspondence may be practically complete. But in times of speculation, when the stage of transactions by cheques and book-credits is past, when manufacturers have to extend their operations, and to obtain accommodation from bankers, notes get out through the wages of workmen, and raise prices. Prior to 1844, the employers, in their desire to hold on, obtained more and more aid from bankers, all the deposits coming forth, and raising prices, till nothing was left but sudden contraction, and the perils and miseries that attend it. Some check, it is true, had been imposed by the prohibition of notes under the value of 5*l.*: but this went but a short way: and the present measure was proposed mainly for the sake of obviating the protraction of the struggle after an access of speculation, and stopping the drain of gold in good time. It is believed to have answered this purpose to a great extent; but here the baffling influence of such an incalculable element as the deposits is perceived. They can still protract the struggle which the operation of the Act of 1844 would otherwise bring to an end. As they do not yield loanable capital at such a time, the rise of interest may still act as if they had not come forth; may still act as a timely check by inducing foreigners to leave their gold with us, or to send in more: but the issue of the deposits does intercept the other timely check of a fall of prices, such as would induce exportation, and bring back gold. This is a case which the Act of 1844 does not meet; and its action is somewhat interfered with by it. Still, the gain, through that Act, in shortening the struggle at the turning point from speculation to collapse is indisputably great; and the Minister, in his expository speech, claimed sympathy from thinking men in his hope and expectation that it would be so.

PASSAGE OF THE BILL.

Hansard, lxxiv. 1346.

The resolutions on which the Bill was founded were brought in on the 20th of May, and agreed to after some debate; and thus parliament first declared in favour of the great change of separating the business of the Bank of England into two distinct departments—the one for the issue of notes; the other for the transaction of the ordinary banking function—a near approach to the adoption of a single bank of issue. There was at no stage opposition enough to endanger the Bill. By the great majority of members of all parties it was earnestly supported; and when some few objected that it would not obviate commercial crises, they were met by the question whether any legislation could neutralize an evil which would occasionally arise while men continue greedy after gain. If its tendency was to check and alleviate such crises, that was all that could be expected from any legislative provision. The Bill became law on the 19th of July.

Hansard, lxxvi. 1061.

SUPPOSED ACTUAL EFFECTS.

Some economists doubted at the time whether the unquestionable advantages obtained by this Bill might not prove to be too dearly purchased: and since the stringent test to which the law was subjected in 1847, there have been more who have published an opinion that they are so. Men of such high authority as Mill, Tooke, and Fullarton, have said so, while expressing themselves with the moderation—not to say hesitation—which the imperfection of our knowledge and experience on this difficult subject demands. Mr. Mill points out that extension of credit by bankers is a great benefit in a season of collapse; and the aid formerly yielded by the Bank, at whatever cost afforded, was salvation itself in such a crisis as that of 1825-6:—that the notes thus issued in aid do not circulate, but go where they are wanted, or lie by, or come back again immediately as deposits:—that the new law does not allow expansion till gold comes for it, when the worst of the crisis is over;—and that, as banks must be the source of aid in crises, such an Act as that of 1844 must, in such a season, be either repealed or suspended.—The experience of 1847 suggests to Mr. Mill a yet worse objection. There are many causes of high prices besides that of undue expansion of credit. Prices may rise by war expenditure, or expenditure for critical political objects;—by foreign investments, in mines or in loans;—by the failure of cotton crops or other raw material from abroad; and by an extraordinary importation of food from bad harvests at home. In these cases, the gold would not be drawn from the circulation, but from hoards and bank reserves; and in this case, the Bank reserve is in effect a hoard. But the arrangement of the Act for the securing of convertibility is aimed at a state of high prices from undue expansion of credit, and from no other cause. The result is that the paper currency is contracted on occasion of every drain, from any cause whatever, and not merely when the gold is withdrawn from the circulation: and thus a crisis is, and must be, occasioned by every derangement of the exchange, or, at least,

Principles of Political Economy, ii. 203—205.

Principles of Political Economy, ii. 206—216.

whenever there is pressure in the money market. Before the crisis of 1847, there had been no speculation which could account for so terrible a collapse as took place in that year. The railway speculation of the time raised the rate of interest, but could not affect the exchange. The drain of gold was caused by the failure of the potato crop at home, and the partial failure of the cotton crop abroad; circumstances of great financial inconvenience, but not adequate to occasion such a collapse of commercial credit as ensued. The Act of 1844 could not operate beneficially here, but, on the contrary, it wrought injuriously by compelling all who wanted gold for exportation to draw it from the deposits, at the very time that interest was highest, and the loanable capital of the country most deficient. If the Bank might then, before there was any collapse of credit, have lent its notes, there would have been no crisis—only a season of pressure. As it was, it was necessary to suspend the Act of 1844; and Mr. Mill, in conducting his review of the measure and its operation, of its advantages and disadvantages, avows that, in his opinion, "the disadvantages greatly preponderate." Much as thinking men may have learned on the subject of Currency within a few years, it is evident that more knowledge and experience are needed yet to bring us into a state of security.

Railway Extension.

Allusion has been made to an excess of railway speculation. Ten years before our present date, there was one railway in England—the Liverpool and Manchester—and in Scotland an awkward one of seven miles long. In these ten years, the system had extended to a magnitude which made it one of the chief boasts, and perhaps the most perplexing difficulty, of the time. Land-owners were groaning over the spoliation of their estates, for which no pecuniary award could be any compensation. Their park walls were cut through—their "dingles and bosky dells" were cut through—and their choicest turf, and their secluded flower-gardens. A serious conflict took place in November, in Lord Harborough's park in Leicestershire, between his lordship's tenantry and the railway surveyors, with the force they assembled. Railways were to run, not only along the southern margin of the island and round the bases of the misty Scottish mountains, but through the vale in which Furness Abbey had hitherto stood shrouded; and among old cathedrals of which the traveller might soon see half a dozen in a day. It was on Easter Monday, 1844, that excursion-trips with return tickets are first heard of. Here began the benefits of cheap pleasure journeys to the hardworkers of the nation. The fares were much lowered; yet the extra receipts on the Dover line for three days were £700, and on the Brighton line £1,943. The process had begun from which incalculable blessings were to accrue to the mind, morals, and manners, of the nation. From this time, the exclusive class was to meet the humbler classes face to face. The peer and the manufacturer and the farmer were henceforth to meet and talk in the railway carriage, and have a chance of understanding each other. The proud were to part with some of their prejudice, and the ignorant with some of their ignorance; and other walls of partition than park enclosures were to be broken down. The operative was to see new sights, hitherto quite out of his reach;—the ocean, the mountain and lake, and old ruins and new inventions: and the London artisan was to live by and by within sight of trees and green fields, and yet go to his work every day. As unwholesome old streets in London were pulled down, hamlets would rise up

Spectator, 1844, p. 397.

in the country where he could live out of working hours, his railway fare to and from business being included in the rent of his cottage. The diet of millions was to be improved—fish and foreign fruits being conveyed into the country, and milk, butter, and vegetables, fresh from the country, to be carried into the towns. Every body's wants and wishes would become known by the general communication about to be established; and the supply would reach the want and the wish. The change was vast, and the prospect magnificent: but this change, like every other, had to pass at its outset through a wilderness of difficulty.

A rage for railway-making took possession of minds prone to speculative folly. Jealousy and competitive zeal sprang up; and lines were planned whose chief purpose seemed to be to injure each other. Rashness and knavery were all abroad; and the foolish and the ignorant were on the highway to ruin, as the prey of the rapacious, or in company with them. There was every probability that capital would be withdrawn to a fatal extent from the manufactures of the country, to be invested in railways which could only bury it at first, however productively it might reappear. Moreover, a prodigious power was now put into the hands of men and companies as yet irresponsible for their use of it. The public had no longer any option how to travel. In a little while, they must go nowhere or be carried by rail—however such a mode of travelling might disagree with their health or their inclination. This in itself was not an obstructive objection to a system fraught with general advantage: but as yet no provision was made against the abuse of the necessity which had arisen. Not only was every body compelled to travel by rail, but the mode and the cost were at the pleasure of the railway proprietors, who might charge what fares they dared, and provide as they thought proper for the accommodation of passengers; no competition could be brought to bear upon the proprietors; and their treatment of the public was regulated by the accident of their own feelings, the tempers of their agents, or their immediate view of their own interests. The question arose what was to be done. There was much argument as to whether railways were or were not a monopoly: but there was a pretty wide agreement that the great new power which had arisen in the midst of us was too formidable to be left without legislative control. Early in the session of 1844, a Select Committee of the Commons sat to consider the best means of adapting the growing railway system to the exigencies of the country.

SELECT COMMITTEE.

The Committee recommended a reduction of the deposit required by parliament to be made before introducing a railway. From one-tenth it was to be one-twentieth. Competing lines were the great difficulty. As the most prominent districts of the country had been first appropriated, almost every new line must be more or less a competing line. It was recommended that a Committee should be appointed to settle which were competing lines and which were not: and then, any competing lines were to be referred to one Committee, whose members must sign a declaration that neither they nor their constituents had any interest which could bias their minds in favour of either line. A Bill was founded on the Reports of the Railway Committee which was passed before the end of the session, after an amount of debate which was natural under the novelty of the circumstances. There was much to be

Hansard, lxxiii. 516.

THEIR BILL.

1843-44. said in censure of the interference of parliament with commercial enterprises, with the regulation of fares, and with the construction of carriages. Men who held it a duty to interfere with manufacturers with regard to the construction of their mills, and the working of their machinery, and the hours of factory labour, objected to interference with the great railway power, which held in its hand the locomotion of the nation: while again, some who protested against factory legislation called for legislative support of the claim of the public, and especially the poorer classes, to safe and comfortable, as well as cheap, travelling.

Comp. to Almanac, 1844, p. 156.

The Act empowered the Lords of the Treasury to reduce fares, after a lapse of years, if the profits of any railway were found permanently to exceed 10 per cent., with a guarantee for the continuance, for a term, of that rate of profit. It provided for the purchase by government, under certain circumstances, of any future railway, under an Act of Parliament to be obtained for the purpose. It provided for the frequent running of third-class carriages; for their being provided with seats and covered from the weather; for their speed and convenient stoppages, and the amount of luggage and of charge—the charge being 1*d.* per mile, and the train being exempt from taxation. It provided for the conveyance of the mails, and of military and police forces, at certain charges, and for the establishment of electric telegraphs under proper conditions. Such, with numerous regulations of detail, were the provisions of the Railway Act of 1844. By an arrangement made in pursuance of a recommendation of the Committee, the Board of Trade was charged with the new and onerous duty of overlooking the Railway system, both as to law and practice. Its business would be to examine and keep watch over all preparations for new railways, and all fresh schemes; to watch over the safety and the interests of the public, and to select from among rival plans. When it appeared that the amount of railway bills was likely to obstruct, if not to drive out, all other business from the House of Commons, and that 800 miles of railway were sanctioned in this session, besides all the proposals that fell through, from one cause or another, people began to ask how the Board of Trade for Railways could possibly manage its responsibilities. When it came out that the estimated cost (usually less than half of the actual cost) was 1400*l.* per mile for the 800 miles just sanctioned by parliament, the graver question arose, how the manufactures and commerce of the country were to sustain this vast abstraction of capital. While sanguine speculators were saying that the doings of this year were a trifle compared with what would be done next, the threatened absorption of capital caused serious alarm to the more enlightened, who better understood what proportion the importance of railroads bore to that of maintaining the manufactures of the country. Such persons foresaw that the new Bank Act would not wait long to be put to a stringent test.

Comp. to Almanac, 1844, p. 104.

The doings of the year *were* a trifle compared with those of the next. There was a want of harmony between the Railway Officers of the Board of Trade and the Committee of the House of Commons. Railways recommended by the one were rejected by the other; and many which were condemned at the Board of Trade were successfully pushed in the House. The Railway department of the Board of Trade was therefore completely remodelled in

1845.
Comp. to Almanac 1846, p. 69.

July, 1845. No Reports on the merits of projected lines were henceforward to be offered; but it was requested of parliament that the Board might be furnished with the fullest information about all railway schemes, including sketches, plans and sections of the lines, in order to a due supervision of the system and its details. As for the House of Commons—it was obliged to set aside the standing orders about its Railway Committees, and to take the projects in groups, which were arranged by a new Classification Committee. The Committees sat almost constantly—even during adjournments of the House—yet they failed to get through nearly all the business offered them. Some schemes could not obtain a hearing at all; others which had been considered safe, were left over to the next session, under a special provision that such business should be taken up where it was now left. Other delays were occasioned by the requisition of the Board of Trade of more plans and statements. While such was the condition of things in connexion with the House, the excitement elsewhere was prodigious. Newspapers for railway topics were springing up in considerable numbers; and the 'Railway Times' for September 27th, had nearly 80 quarto pages filled with advertisements. The journals of the time tell that 332 new schemes were proposed before the month of October in this year, involving a capital of £270,950,000, and for which upwards of £23,000,000 would have to be deposited before an Act could be applied for. A multitude of other schemes were in an incipient state; and there were 66 foreign railway projects in the English market. It was believed that altogether the number of plans which would be brought to the door of the Board of Trade by the expiration of the closing day would be 815. The number which succeeded in obtaining admission was above 600. The closing day was the 30th of November.

Annual Register, 1845, Chron. 177.

Delivery of Plans.

As the Summer closed and the Autumn wore on, the most desperate efforts were made to get ready these plans. One lithographic printer brought over four hundred lithographers from Belgium; and yet could not get his engagements fulfilled. The draughtsmen and printers in the lithographic establishments lived there, snatching two or three hours' sleep on the floor, or on benches, and then going dizzily to work again. Much work was executed imperfectly; and much was thrown over altogether. Horses were hired at great cost, and kept under lock and key, to bring to town at the last moment plans prepared in the country. Express trains were engaged for the same purpose; and there were cases in which railway directors refused such accommodation to rival projectors, obliging the clerks in charge of the plans to hasten round some other way, with every risk of being too late. At the Board of Trade, every preparation was made for the pressure of the closing day. The day was Sunday—a circumstance which had been overlooked when the date was fixed. A large establishment of clerks was in readiness; and the work went on with some quietness till eleven at night. It had been settled that all applicants who were actually in the Hall before the clock struck twelve should be considered to be in time; and during the last hour, the crowd became inconvenient, and the registering could by no diligence keep pace with the applications. The calling of the agents' names, as a summons to the inner office, was listened to with nervous agitation by the expectants in the lobby; and there was a large crowd outside which amused

Spectator, 1845, p. 1155.

1843-44. itself freely with the bustle of the arrivals, and the masses of papers that were carried in. Twelve o'clock began to strike, and the doors were closing, when an agent pushed his way in. As the clock had not done striking when he arrived, he was, after some parley, admitted. No more came for a few minutes; but before the quarter had struck, a post-chaise, with four reeking horses, dashed up: three gentlemen rushed out, each loaded with a mass of papers, and found the door at the end of the passage closed. The crowd shouted to them to ring the bell; and one of them did so. A police inspector opened the door; and as soon as it appeared that he was not going to admit them, the agents threw their papers into the hall, breaking the lamp that was burning there. The papers were thrown out again; and once more in and out, when the door was opened. One of the agents told his story to the crowd, who laughed heartily at it. The post-boy did not know London streets, and could not find the Board of Trade. He had been driving the agents about the streets of Pimlico ever since half-past ten. This was a comic ending, in the eyes of the thoughtless, of the competitive railway struggle of 1845: but all thoughtful persons felt very gravely about it. If this mass of railways could be constructed, the operation would be fearful upon the manufacturing interests of the country: and if not, what loss must befal a host of ignorant and unwary speculators! It would be the scene of 1825-6 over again. If the promoters of these projects believed that they could succeed, it was a serious thing to have among us so many men of education so ignorant of political economy, and so senseless about social affairs. If they did not so believe, but hoped to profit by the ruin of their neighbours, it was a serious thing to have among us so many men of education of a morality so loose and low. It was a painful exhibition, whichever way it was looked at.

Gauge Question. The Great Western Railway had been constructed on a broader gauge than others, and the disputes about the comparative merits of the broad and narrow gauge ran high. There could be no dispute, however, about the mischief of the co-existence of the two. Goods sent from Birmingham and other places were stopped on reaching the Great Western at Gloucester, and had to be shifted into another train. The delay and injury thus caused were great; and there was a loud demand that the Great Western, which had at work only 274 miles of length, while there were 1901 miles of the narrow gauge, should conform to the gauge of other railways. In June, 1845, Mr. Cobden moved for an Address to the Sovereign, praying for the appointment of a Royal Commission, to inquire into the merits of the broad and narrow gauge, and into the best method of getting rid of the evil of "the break of gauge," and of securing uniformity henceforth. The Commission asked for was appointed, and made a long Report the next year. The Commission reported, on the whole, in favour of the narrow gauge, and recommended that the Great Western should be accommodated to it; a change which would cost only about £1,000,000. The Railway Board framed a Bill which departed from the recommendation of this Report. It recognised the narrow as the national gauge henceforth; but did not propose to alter the Great Western. On the contrary, it proposed to construct various branches of that line on the broad gauge also. Their Bill, which was passed, disappointed the commercial public, and every body else who saw that uniformity of gauge must be secured

Hansard, lxxxi. 1183.

Comp. to Almanac, 1847, p. 56.

sooner or later; and that the longer it was put off, the greater would be the difficulty, while serious injury was meantime daily inflicted.

POOR LAW AMENDMENTS. *Ante*, p. 86.

It was related, in our narrative of the preparation of the Poor Law, that some discontent was occasioned by that clause of the amended law by which the maintenance of illegitimate children was thrown upon the mothers: that the effect of this provision was manifestly and immediately good; but that a mistaken sentiment, injurious to the true interests of woman, caused a modification of the law in 1839, by which it was rendered more easy to reach the putative father, and compel him to bear the burden. A further change was made this year, in consequence chiefly of the discontent existing among the Welsh peasantry on account of the bastardy law. Rebecca and her daughters insisted upon this as one of their chief grievances; and the Commissioners of Inquiry into the state of Wales reported the complaint emphatically. The consequence was that a Bill was framed and passed by which the mother was enabled to make application against the father, instead of its being made by parish officers; and a stronger compulsion was brought to bear upon the father.—The same Act made some alterations in the proportion between rates and rateable value; empowered some large towns to provide asylums for the houseless poor; and enabled the Commissioners to combine parishes and unions in their several districts into school districts; and also into districts for the audit of accounts.

Political Dictionary, i. 322.

POST OFFICE ESPIONAGE.

On the 14th of June, which was Friday, the House of Commons was startled by the presentation of a petition, the news of which produced strong excitement in London and the country during the non-parliamentary days of Saturday and Sunday. Four persons, of whom two were foreigners and two Chartists, sent up a petition, by the hands of Mr. Duncombe, complaining that letters which they had posted within the last month had been detained, broken open and read, by certain of the authorities belonging to Her Majesty's Post Office. The petitioners declared, "That they considered such a practice, introducing as it did the spy system of foreign States, as repugnant to every principle of the British Constitution, and subversive of the public confidence, which was so essential to a commercial country." They begged for a Commission of Inquiry, which should afford redress to themselves, and future security to all letter-writers. Mr. Duncombe desired an explanation, as he had warned the Home Secretary that he should do. Sir James Graham refused to explain more than that the allegations in the petition were in part untrue—the letters of three of the signers having never, to the best of his belief, been meddled with: that, with regard to the fourth, he had acted in accordance with a law which had been renewed so recently as 1837: that, by that law, the Secretaries of State had the power of opening and detaining letters: and that, under this sanction, he had issued a warrant, since destroyed, for opening the letters of one of the petitioners. He would not say which of the four it was; but Joseph Mazzini was universally understood to be the one.

Hansard, lxxv. 892.

Sir James Graham himself, as a true Englishman, could hardly quarrel with the excitement caused in the House and the country by this disclosure, though the popular indignation was directed against himself. It was a case in which the national heart and mind might well be excused for pronouncing judgment

1843-44. prior to the production of evidence. The evidence must now come out; and the Home Secretary knew how it would at last modify opinions about himself, and set him right with the nation: but meantime, though he had to run the gauntlet through a long and bitter infliction of insults, he would, as a benevolent statesman, rather endure this than have seen the people apathetic or capable of levity about such a matter as the violation of epistolary confidence. His probation was terrible. The most cool and cautious newspapers gave out their cool and cautious reprobation of the act; and there was hardly a public print, a public speaker, or perhaps a private family, that did not heap insults or expressions of disgust upon his name. Advertisements of secure envelopes met the eye every where, and Anti-Graham wafers were shed abroad. Caricatures represented the Home Secretary as the spy of foreign potentates, and the tool of his brother Secretary for Foreign Affairs. Hundreds of people began to be sure that their letters had been tampered with. Testimonies to Mazzini's virtues appeared in the London Journals; and obscure individuals rashly offered themselves as the medium of the correspondence of foreigners henceforth, under the impression that we were living under a spy system, which would not allow the exile to pour out his heart to his nearest relations till the government had first heard what he had to say. Here and there, an honourable and trusted person—as Mr. Warburton—defended Sir James Graham: but this only deepened the astonishment. Here and there, some rational person, as much a lover of liberty as the petitioners themselves, pointed out that we have no passport system, and now no stringent alien-supervision: and that such a power of letter-opening as the law gave to the Secretaries of State was absolutely necessary for the frustration of conspiracy at home, and to prevent our country from becoming a nest of conspiracy against foreign governments in alliance with us: but such explanations excited little but indignation. And this was very well. It not only evidenced the honest and generous feeling of Englishmen on a matter of high morality: it enhanced the merit of the support given to Sir James Graham by other and rival statesmen when the right time came, and the impressiveness of his justification when the Committees of Inquiry presented their Report.

There was a Committee of each House—secret, of course, but composed of men who commanded universal confidence. Their Reports were in the hands of the public in August; and they settled the question, without any alteration of the law. It appeared (to the astonishment of the nation, which had lost all remembrance of the fact) that the Post Office was established on the express condition, notified in the preambles of the Acts, that the government should be entitled to inspect any letters that it chose. In the old, half-barbarous times, the people were willing to have their letters conveyed speedily and safely on that condition. The power had since been revised and confirmed; and, at the last date, in the year of Queen Victoria's accession. There was no doubt about the law of the case; and indeed there had been none, since ex ministers of all parties had got up, one after another, in parliament, to avow that they had used the power. Lord Tankerville testified to the existence of a warrant signed by Mr. Fox, in 1782, ordering the detention and opening of all letters addressed to Foreign Ministers: and of another warrant, directing that all letters addressed to Lord George Gordon should be opened. Lord

Hansard, lxxv. 1330.

Normanby had used the power in Ireland, for the detection of "low ribbonism which could not be ferretted out by other means." Lord J. Russell had held Sir J. Graham's office in the full conviction that the law gave him the power under investigation, and that the sole question was how it was used. On this point, the Report of the Committee was eminently satisfactory with regard to the conduct of Sir James Graham. He had not only done nothing more than had been done by all his predecessors, but he had been more scrupulous and more careful. He had seen the warrants destroyed at the first possible moment; whereas other Ministers had been careless in allowing them to remain in existence. The specification of the number of warrants issued during a long course of years effectually calmed the public mind. From 1799 to 1844, the number of warrants issued was 372; that is, a fraction above eight in a year: but, when it is considered that the average is so greatly exceeded in years of alarm as to amount to 28 in 1812, 20 in 1842, 17 in 1831, 16 in 1839, and so on, the Post Office may be considered practically inviolate; and it has since been so considered. The conclusion drawn from the whole inquiry was, that it would not be desirable to deprive the government of this power of frustrating conspiracy, in extraordinary cases; nor yet to surround the power with new legal restrictions which would raise it into a fresh and pernicious importance in the eyes both of rulers and the people. No steps, therefore, were taken in consequence of the Reports, which had answered their purpose in bringing out a knowledge of the law and the facts of the case, for the benefit of all parties.

Hansard, lxxvi. 312.
Hansard, lxxv. 1285.

One reason for the vehemence of indignation displayed on this occasion was that a rumour prevailed that Signor Mazzini's letters had been examined at the desire of the Sardinian Minister, who thus made the British Cabinet a tool of foreign despotism. This was put an end to by a few words from the Duke of Wellington: "He was enabled to state that there was no foundation whatever for these rumours."

Hansard, lxxv. 985.

Alien Act.

The new Alien Act of this session, its enlarged scope, and the perfect indifference with which it was received, show that Great Britain had no particular sympathy with the jealousies and fears of foreign despots. For some years past, the registration provisions of our Alien law had been practically useless. The Act contained no provision for enforcing any penalty on the omission to register: and foreigners omitted it whenever it suited them. In 1842, out of 11,600 foreigners officially known to have landed, only 6,084 registered under the Act. Out of 794 who landed at Hull in that year, only one registered: at Southampton, out of 1,174, not one: and at Liverpool, no account whatever was kept of the foreigners who arrived. The time was clearly come for removing all impediments, real or nominal, to the settlement of foreigners in England. It would have been done very long before, but for the perpetual opposition of popular prejudice. The popular prejudice against aliens now seemed to be worn out; and the thing was done—liberally and thoroughly.—Without delay, and at a trifling cost, foreigners could now secure the privileges of native subjects. They could secure from the Secretary of State a charter of naturalization more liberal than parliament could formerly confer. The only exclusion was from parliament and the Council Board: and even this exclusion might be cancelled, through an appeal to parliament. The new

Political Dictionary, i. p. 103.

1843-44. privileges were to extend, as of course, to aliens already resident in the country; and all women married to British subjects were naturalized *de facto*. Such was the scope of the measure of which Mr. Hutt, the mover, said, "He believed it would be productive of much real practical advantage, and that it would conduce to the reputation of the country. He had to express his acknowledgments to Sir R. Peel for much kindness and encouragement. In other times, attempts to settle this question on a sound and liberal basis had more than once convulsed the whole nation, and proved fatal to the existence of governments. To have been permitted to bring such a question to a final and peaceful conclusion, was very gratifying to his feelings."

Spectator, 1844, p. 723.

So far was this measure from convulsing the nation and perilling its rulers now, that we find the 'Spectator' observing, the week after its passage, that it had "escaped the notice of the newspapers." Such was one of the effects of the enlightening and tranquillizing influences of long-continued Peace.

CHAPTER XII.

1841—64.

ANTAGONISM IN EUROPE.

THE mere existence of the rumour that the Sardinian government was jealous of the residence of Signor Mazzini in England points to a popular expectation of troubles in Italy, and, as a consequence, among the despotisms of Europe. It was so. Signs of approaching struggle multiplied to watchful eyes: and while Eastern despotism and the claims of Western civilization were falling into a position of antagonism more distinct every day, the free nations of Western Europe, who must form the main strength on one side when the War of Opinion should at length break out, were grievously disposed to quarrel among themselves.

RUSSIA. Custine's Russia, i. p. 147.

A traveller in Russia reports a certain Prince K. to have pointed out to him that Russia is now only 400 years distant from the invasion of barbarians; while Western Europe boasts an interval of 1400; and that an additional civilization of 1000 years makes an immeasurable change in the mind and manners of a people. The conviction was now spreading every where that peoples separated by the civilization of a thousand years could not much longer live in alliance and apparent peace: and that henceforth the more civilized party would have no release from watching the other till the outbreak should happen that must decide which of them should prevail. In Western Europe, government had for many centuries been a purely political institution, constantly admitting more and more of the democratic principle. In Russia, which is even now more Asiatic than European, government is a religious institution: the Emperor stands before the eyes of his people as their Priest, and in their catechism as a god. In proportion as communication of persons and of ideas increases, such differences as these must come into collision. If the Czar means to keep the mind of Russia from encroachment first, and revolution afterwards, it is necessary for him to guard his frontier well, and to uphold, as his outer defences, all existing despotisms. Whenever, therefore, these existing despotisms were perilled from within or from without, peace with Russia became more precarious, and the eventual outbreak was felt to bo drawing on. The Emperor was, and is, in the habit of saying that nothing is further from his thoughts than conquest: that he has as much territory as any man can possibly wish for; and that he has enough to do to cherish and improve his Russian subjects. Supposing this to be perfectly sincere, it may become necessary, according to his views—indispensable to the cherishing of his native subjects—to extinguish communities which hold dangerous ideas. If that extinction should be tried where the work is easy—this is a sufficient reason for watchfulness on the part of the Western peoples. If it should be difficult, the struggle would be precisely that War of Opinion for which the western peoples were warned by political philosophers to prepare.

What vigilant eyes could see was this. The Emperor lost no opportunity of insulting the King of the French. Since the revolution of 1830, he had behaved with increasing rudeness; and now his temper was becoming as bitter as it had always been overbearing. In August, 1842, the King of Prussia had issued an Ordinance calling together the elements of a popular representation: and from that moment, Russian relations with Prussia became cool, distant, and threatening. In September, 1843, there was a revolution in Greece; a revolution so needed, and so universally desired, that the people obtained a Constitution without any struggle; and England and France, and even Austria, uttered not one word of rebuke or remonstrance: but, when the Greek Assembly began its sittings, an armed Russian steamer appeared at the Piræus; the Russian ambassador was summoned on board; and he was carried off without being even allowed to land. He was dismissed with disgrace from the service of the Emperor, and his papers seized. At the same time, the brightness of Russian favour shone on the Court at Vienna during a conference which was held there—a conference ill suited to the date of 1844. Plenipotentiaries from the German States met Prince Metternich at Vienna to hear from him how perilous was the popular desire for an extension of the powers of the Chambers. "It perverts youth," said the grey-headed Minister, "and seduces even men of mature age." It was settled at this Conference that any extension of the rights of the Chambers was a direct injury to the rights of the Crown; that, in case of any appeal by the Chambers to the Constitution, the government alone should be the interpreter of the Constitution; that the acts of the Chambers, while legal, should stand, as far as the government should think proper; and so on, through a series of twenty Resolutions, all consonant to the Czar's modes of thinking, and certain to ensure that brilliant favour with which he was now regarding the Austrian Court. In the Caucasus, the Emperor was pushing the war with the desperation of despotic wrath. In one season, the fever cut off 5000 of his soldiers; and his forces were surrounded by fire in the forests, obstructed by barricades at all openings, and crushed in the passes by rocks rolled from above:—2000 officers were slain in one campaign, and the General-in-Chief, Woronzow, appeared with a countenance of deep melancholy at its close; melancholy on account of slain comrades and his suffering forces; yet was every officer disgraced who made any failure in any expedition against the Circassians; and the Circassian patriots were spoken of and treated as vermin, fit only to be exterminated.—In Servia again, he appeared as an avenging despot, after having declared himself, in the Treaty of Adrianople, the Protector of Servia, granting certain rights and liberties to the Servians. The Servians expelled a Prince whom they detested, and elected one whom they loved. Turkey let them alone: but Russia interfered, proscribing, banishing, insisting on new elections, terrifying the people into submission, but by no means increasing their love for Russian protection, or their desire for Russian intercourses. We are told by an authority worthy of all respect, that since the strange accidents which caused the Russian army to be encamped at Paris, not only has Russia declared herself the protector of the cause of monarchy in Europe, but her people have become fully persuaded that, as other states fall to pieces under the explosive force of the democratic principle, Russia is to put them together again, and dispose of them at her pleasure. Absurd as this notion appears to us, it is sedulously

Prussia.

Greece.
Annual Register, 1843, p. 314.

Austria.

Annual Register, 1844, p. 278.

The Caucasus.
Annual Register, 1845. Chron. 153.

Servia.
Annuaire Hist. 1844, p. 404.

Edinburgh Review, lxxix. p. 388.

declared wherever Russia has partisans; and especially in Germany. It appears to have been in the discharge of his assumed vocation that the Czar achieved the last act of despotic meddling which falls within the period of our history—the extinction of the independence of Cracow, in 1846. It has been related how Cracow was insulted and overborne, in 1836; in February, 1846, the Austrians, who held the city, were driven out by those who conceived themselves the proper inhabitants, and who were exasperated into the adventure of striking one more blow for the liberties of Poland. They were supported by an extensive insurrection in Silesia, and for a time held their ground wonderfully. But they could not long resist the pressure of the three great Powers who now united to overthrow for ever the independence they had bound themselves by treaties to protect. The Austrian forces took the town of Podgorze, which commands Cracow from the opposite bank of the Vistula: the Prussian general, De Felden, invested Cracow, and the Russian troops marched into the city, without opposition. Without opposition, because all the inhabitants had fled except the aged and children.—The three Protecting Powers presently settled the case of Cracow among themselves. As the treaties of 1815 were entered into among themselves, they could not see that the rest of the world had any thing to do with the fate of Cracow, except to hear the news: and in November, therefore, they merely announced, with a condescending exhibition of reasons, that the Republic of Cracow was no more; that the treaties were revoked; and that the city and territory of Cracow were annexed to, and for ever incorporated with, the Austrian monarchy.

Cracow.

Annual Register, 1846, p. 304.

Annual Register, 1846, p. 308.

As he held his position by a religious, as well as political tenure, it was impossible for the Czar to tolerate varieties of religious faith. The Jews were made to feel this in 1843. By an Ukase issued in that year, all Jews residing within fifteen leagues of the frontier were compelled to sell their goods on the instant, and repair to the interior of the empire. All who could not convince the government that they held a position of which government was to be the judge, were sentenced to banishment to the steppes. The Jews were to be subject henceforth to recruiting for military service; and their children were held at the disposal of the Emperor for the naval service.—For some time, the Pope and his Church had met with insolent treatment from the great potentate of the Greek Church; and by this time it was clear that the Pope was growing submissive through long-continued alarm. As his tone became subdued, that of the Czar grew gracious; and in 1844, he restored his suspended diplomatic relations with Rome, by sending thither one of his ablest Ministers from Constantinople. The chief ground of quarrel was supposed to be the persecution of the Poles by the Emperor, on account of their faith, and his oppressive attempts to bring them over to the Greek Church. When there was reason to believe that the aged and timid Pontiff was willing to listen submissively, the Czar discovered that the air of Palermo would be good for the health of his Empress; and he was presently standing before the old Pope in the Vatican, giving an account of his treatment of the Latin Church in Poland, and listening to a more spirited remonstrance than it was at all his custom to hear. He wore a respectful air, knowing that the Pontiff, then in his 80th year, could not live long, and that it was inconceivable that the next Pope could have equal zeal for the Church, while events were showing that

Russian Jews.

Annuaire Hist. 1843, p. 295.

The Czar and the Pope.

civil disturbance of every kind was in preparation. And the Pope did die in the next year, leaving an inheritance of hopeless trouble to his successor.

Gregory XVI.

Pope Gregory XVI. had been Pontiff since February 1831. Able as a propagandist, he was wholly unfit for civil rule; and the abuses of his realm were unreformed in his time, and so aggravated as to keep his subjects in a restive state, and all the despotic monarchs of Europe in a condition of perpetual alarm. With certain of the sovereigns he was on strange terms. We have seen something of his relations with the Czar. He granted to France, most unwillingly, the liberty of dealing harshly with the Jesuits; and he enjoyed as his recompense, the friendship of the Orleans family and Cabinet. His feud with Prussia about the affair of the Archbishop of Cologne was most serious;—serious enough, if the world had been three centuries younger, to have plunged all Europe in war. A more perplexing close of the controversy was avoided by the prudence of the new sovereign of Prussia. Frederick William III. died in June 1840. His son declared an amnesty, which included the religious disputants among others. Then followed words of peace on both sides—conciliatory charges on the part of the prelates—declarations of satisfaction on the part of the King. The pope yielded nothing which the most zealous churchman could reproach him for; and the new King of Prussia evaded a perilous controversy with the Papacy. In his civil government, Gregory XVI. was eminently unsuccessful. When the outcry about Signor Mazzini's letters being opened was raised in England, there was a universal presentiment that popular risings in Italy might be expected. The Pope had broken his promises of reform: his Cardinals had governed with cruelty, as well as with their usual want of sense and knowledge of the men of their century; and the year before his death was embittered to the old Pontiff by fierce insurrections throughout his dominions. The manifesto of the insurgents, exhibiting his broken promises and his acts of tyranny, must have struck upon his heart; and for a few days, there seemed reason to suppose that the revolutionary party might succeed. Town after town declared against the ancient tyranny; and the papal troops went over to the liberals. But a battle at Ravenna closed the struggle, by defeating and dispersing the insurgents. All was over for this time; but every body was aware that it was only for a time. Italy was, of all the countries of Europe, the choicest skirmishing ground for the coming War of Opinion; and the Papal realm, again, the choicest within the bounds of Italy.—It was no great gain to set against these perils that Rome was once more on good terms with Portugal, and was about to be so with Spain. The frequent revolutions in these countries, and the constant state of turbulence, in which the clergy suffered dreadfully, had long ago alienated the Holy See. By the mediation of Austria, Portugal was reconciled with Rome; and in 1846, it was a topic of warm discussion in the Cortes whether Spain, already in friendly negotiation for the same object, might enter into a state of perfect affiliation, if the mediation of England were sought rather than that of France accepted. It was very well that there should be peace among those Courts; but all three were so profoundly weak that it mattered little to the welfare of any but themselves what terms they were on.

Annuaire Hist. 1840, p. 423.

Annual Register, 1845, p. 266.

Portugal.

Spain.

1841—46.

SWITZERLAND.

HANOVER.

Annual Register, 1846: Chron. 55.

SWEDEN.

Annuaire Hist. 1844, p. 395.

In Switzerland there was much confusion during this period; warfare between the aristocratic and the democratic principles, and between the Catholic and Protestant faiths. It was not conceivable that the conflict of opinion should be brought to a close there when it was kindling in other parts of Europe.—In Hanover, the king was growing tired of hearing of poor officers' widows; and he issued an Ordinance regulating the love-affairs of all the officers of the Hanoverian army. They were not to betroth themselves without his permission; and the requisite permission was to be obtained by methods of application which it is astonishing that the most antique despot of our time should have dreamed of proposing to any body of men whatever. The Ordinance can be regarded only as a decree for the increase of invalid marriages.—Meantime, old Bernadotte, the most successful of Napoleon's generals and monarchs, was gone. He came out of the Pyrenees as a private soldier, though a man of education. He died, in peace and beloved, the King of Sweden and Norway, leaving a son to succeed him who was more ready than he had proved himself to reform some of the grossest social and political abuses of the old feudal kingdom of Sweden, while cordially respecting the more democratic constitution of Norway. Charles John XIV. of Sweden died in March, 1844, on his 81st birthday, after a reign of 26 years.

Thus far, the movements and events that we have briefly detailed have been those in which Great Britain was not immediately concerned. Every incident, in a time when trouble and turbulence are on the increase from year to year—even from month to month—must concern every nation in the world; but our country had only to look on in regard to the events which have been related; whereas in others she had to judge and act.

TURKEY AND EGYPT.

In pursuance of their object of keeping Russia in check by preserving Turkey, the governments of England and France exerted themselves vigorously in 1839 to prevent the threatened war between Turkey and Egypt. If, as seemed very possible, the Sultaun should be beaten by his powerful vassal, the Czar might send his ships into the Bosphorus. The thing to be done was to prevent Turkey from being so weakened as to afford a pretext for this dangerous aid. The Pasha of Egypt declared himself ready for an accommodation: but the Sultaun was too highly offended by the haughty assumptions of his vassal to give up the hope of punishing him; and he declared this war to be a duty required of him by his function of high-priest of Islamism. War was proclaimed—the Pasha and his son declared to be deposed—and the fleet ready for sailing, early in June 1839. Syria was the field of conflict; and every thing seemed to depend on whether the Syrian population would or would not rise against the Egyptians. Some observers declared that the Syrians hated the Egyptians: others that they favoured them. The truth appears to have been that their taxation under Egyptian rule was very oppressive: but that other causes swayed the likings of large bodies of the people; as, for instance, the toleration afforded to the Christians by Egypt—a toleration never to be expected from the Porte. On the first meeting of the armies, Ibraheem, the heir of the Egyptian Viceroyalty, won a splendid victory. Before the news of the defeat of the Turks could reach Constantinople, the Sultaun was dead.—His son and successor was only 17 years of age. His accession afforded an opportunity for a change of policy. He changed his Ministers

Annual Register, 1839, p. 411.

1841—46. and his Ambassadors at the European Courts; and then offered to Mohammed Alee pardon and the perpetual succession of his family to power in Egypt, if he would submit and be at peace. The Pasha declared himself willing to do so if the dominion over Syria and Candia were secured to his family, as well as that of Egypt.

The Five Powers—England, France, Russia, Prussia, and Austria—here assumed the management of the affair. While their envoys consulted in London, the French and English fleets cruised in the Levant to keep the truce. The case was now much perplexed by the Turkish admiral having carried his ships to Alexandria, and put them into the power of the Pasha. A suspicion was abroad that the French government encouraged the Pasha to retain this fleet, when he would otherwise have given it up: and at the same time, it was whispered in London, and thence spread into other countries, that three of the Five Powers would make the restitution of the fleet and the surrender of Syria indispensable conditions of the Pasha's retaining even the hereditary dominion over Egypt. However this might be, the old Viceroy was active in raising troops, drilling the navy, and preparing for decisive war. The Five Powers were, however, so long over their work, that all the world grew tired; and especially Turkey—the party most interested. The Turks began to think that they could come to an understanding with the Pasha, if they were let alone: and, as the Pasha had repeatedly declared that the Prime Minister at the Porte, Khosrew Pasha, was the mischief-maker who prevented an accommodation, the Turks deposed Khosrew Pasha, in June, 1840. The fleet was not, however, rendered up by the time four of the Five Powers (France being omitted) signed a convention, on the 15th of July. The Pasha delayed about accepting the terms offered. The Sultaun grew angry, and declared him deposed; and then, very naturally, the Pasha concluded that all was over, and prepared for the worst. Then the British vessels in the Levant blockaded Alexandria and the Syrian ports; and in September, they bombarded Beirout. The Egyptians lost ground every where; and in November Acre fell before the attacks of the allied squadrons. Jerusalem returned to its allegiance to the Porte; and the Egyptians had no other hope than that of getting back to the Nile, with a remnant of their force. When assured that he would be secured in the Viceroyalty of Egypt, if he delivered up the Turkish fleet and evacuated Syria, Mohammed Alee did so; and in return, received the firman which gave the dominion of Egypt to himself and his heirs.

Annual Register, 1840, p. 191.

Some weeks afterwards, however, the Porte sought to impose the disagreeable condition that the Sultaun should choose among the heirs, at the time of the death of any Viceroy, the one he should prefer. The Five Powers protected the Pasha from this encroachment, and his affairs were at last considered settled. From that time to the day of his death, he was wont to taunt European travellers with the state of Syria, and ask them if they did not wish it back in his hands. And it was quite true that, under his rule, the roads were as safe for travellers as he had made his great highway of the Nile; while in Syria there was nothing that could be called government; and the roads were infested with marauders. The Christians of the Lebanon would not settle under Turkish rule. Some heavy taxes and the conscription were gone; but now there was no security for life and property. The most curious circumstance is that different tribes of Christians in the Lebanon, who had for some time been at war with each other, were believed by the European officers stationed in Syria to be fighting out the quarrels which had risen up between England, France, and Russia, in the course of their conference on eastern affairs—the Maronites being supposed to be in the interest of France, the Druses of England, and the Greek Christians of Russia. A charge had before been brought against the British government of raising the tribes of the Lebanon against the Pasha's rule; a charge emphatically denied by Lord Palmerston: and now, in 1841, the jealousies between the French and English in Syria and Egypt were becoming as absurdly bitter as such jealousies are when indulged in so far from home, and amidst the *ennui* of a foreign station.

Route to India.

Before entering upon the controversies which arose among the Five Powers, we must point out to notice the remarkable self-command of the Pasha in opposing no difficulty to the passage of the English through Egypt, *en route* for India. The injury to Great Britain would have been enormous, if this *route* had been closed, and she had been forced back upon her old track by the Cape. However certain it might be that Mohammed Alee would eventually have suffered by any vindictive use of his power over this passage to India, it must be regarded as a proof of a wisdom and self-command astonishing in a man of his origin and circumstances, that he never spoke a word nor lifted a finger in obstruction, but allowed the English to pass to the Red Sea as freely as if no mortal controversy were pending.

France.

Towards the end of 1840, a leading Journal at Paris is found saying, "We have confided for ten years in the alliance of England; we confide in it no more. We stand alone, and alone are prepared to maintain, if need be, the balance of power, and independence of Europe. Paris, without defence, involves the safety of the whole country; Paris, fortified, will prove its bulwark."

War spirit.

Mem. of Lord Palmerston, Aug. 31, 1840.

Mem. of M. Guizot, July 24, 1840.

—Here was the subject of the fortifications revived. The occasion, or the pretext, for resuming the works was the expectation of war with England: and the occasion, or the pretext, for expecting a war with England was the difference that had arisen about the Eastern question. France believed that the safety of Turkey would be best secured by putting Syria under the rule of the Pasha; and that the Pasha would prove quiet and trustworthy when once settled in his guaranteed dominion. The other Four Powers believed that the ambition of the Pasha would keep him always restless, and that if he was not now kept in bounds, there might be no end to the disturbance he might cause, and the incursions he would make. Meanwhile, time pressed. The risings in the Lebanon stimulated the members of the convention. If France could not come over to their view, neither could they wait: and thus it was that the treaty of July 15th was signed by Four Powers, to the exclusion of France. France was jealous, and remonstrated through her Minister, M. Guizot; and next, she became quick-sighted to see "concealed menaces" in the Declaration of the Convention for the pacification of the Levant. She next saw, in imagination, the combined forces of the Four Powers—or at least the armies of England—marching into France; and hence the renewed cry for the fortification of Paris.—In October, the French really believed war with

1841—46. England to be inevitable. M. Thiers, the Prime Minister of France, had instructed M. Guizot to say that France would consider it a cause of war if Mohammed Alee should be driven from Egypt as British and Turkish cannon were driving him out of Syria; and just after, the young Sultaun committed that foolish act of haste—declaring the deposition of Mohammed Alee. When the news reached France, the politicians and journalists of France declared that a true *casus belli* had now occurred. It was not so; for England could and did immediately prove that she was resolved to secure to the Pasha the dominion of Egypt: but the war spirit did not decline in France, in consequence of this or of any other explanation that could be afforded. The King was known to be as earnestly in favour of peace as his Minister, M. Thiers, was disposed for war. Men were speculating on which would prevail when occasion arrived for deciding the matter for the moment. The King and his Minister could not agree about the speech to be delivered at the opening of the Chambers. The Minister desired to announce a vast new levy of troops: the King would not hear of it, and the Minister resigned, with all his colleagues. In Queen Victoria's Speech at the end of the preceding session, France had not been mentioned at all, though a notification had been given of the Convention for the Pacification of the Levant; and the French had complained bitterly of this as a slight. In the Speech of the King of the French, no such slight was offered in return; for the mention of the Four Powers was serious enough. Amidst the deep silence of a listening auditory, as numerous as the Chambers could contain, the King announced that the Convention and its Declaration imposed grave duties on him: that he prized the dignity of France as much as its tranquillity: that the reasons for the extraordinary credits which had been opened would be readily understood: and that he hoped, after all, that peace would be preserved.

Annuaire Hist. 1840, p. 310.

There was no reason, indeed, why it should not. The affairs of the East were soon considered settled: "it takes two to make a quarrel;" and none of the Four Powers had any present cause of war against France. If there was to be a war, France must begin. She did not begin; and all the world knew that a warlike Ministry had been dismissed for a pacific one.—In a little while, the chances of peace were further improved by Lord Aberdeen's entrance upon the Foreign Office in London, in the place of Lord Palmerston. Rightly or wrongly, Lord Palmerston was supposed to have an extraordinary talent for creating uncomfortable feelings in Foreign Allies, and for bringing on awkward and critical events. He was regarded as a busy, clever, imperious man, very trying to have to do with; while Lord Aberdeen was found to be the high-bred gentleman of the diplomatic world; liberal, quiet, not apt to interfere, but frank when actually engaged in affairs, as watchful as inoffensive, and, without supineness, disposed to put a good construction on the acts of allies, and to make allowance for the mere harmless irritability of weak and harassed rulers of any country less happy than our own. It was well that the ministers on both sides of the Channel were, in 1841, men of peace; for the war party in France, which was noisy beyond all proportion to its numbers, and which had actually obtained possession of too much of the journalism of the time, was insane enough to laud a speech of a turbulent deputy, in favour of an alliance with Russia against England, and to raise this into a temporary popular demand. If such a thing could have been, the War of Opinion would have presented a curious aspect indeed. Meantime, money for fortifications was voted—the wall and the detached forts were to be carried on together and with vigour—and the ministers procured for the government the right of constructing the works in any way it pleased; a privilege against which M. Odillon Barrot protested in a manner which now appears very significant—lest those fortifications should hereafter be used to overawe and injure the people of Paris. It was on the 1st of April that the final vote was taken.

Annuaire His. 1841, p. 66.

Right of Search.

Annual Register, 1841, p. 254.

At the end of the year a treaty was signed which occasioned new trouble hereafter. By this treaty, signed in London on the 20th of December, France, Austria, Russia, and Prussia, agreed with England to adopt her laws in regard to the slave trade. Hence arose the subsequent difficulties and disputes about the Right of Search. As the slave trade was declared to be piracy, and those who carried it on to be guilty of felony, it naturally followed that these Five Powers conceded to each other the right of searching all vessels carrying their respective flags, which were under suspicion of having slaves on board. The vigilant war-party immediately declared an apprehension that the independence of the French flag might suffer; and they actually carried in the Chamber of Deputies an admonitory resolution, in favour of which the whole Chamber voted, except the five ministers who sat there. The fact was, some difficulties had occurred with American vessels on the high seas, and some consequent dispute with the United States government about the Right of Search; and some mistakes in practice had been made, owing, as the French ministers emphatically declared, not to the treaty of 1841, or any other treaty, but to instructions to cruisers, issued by Lord Palmerston; and these things suggested to the war-party the cry about the honour of the French flag. The debates about this question in the French Chambers, on occasion of the Address, in the session of 1842, merged into discussion of the value of the English alliance; when the ministers, Guizot and Soult especially, spoke so manfully in the cause of peace, reasonableness, and the English alliance, that the Opposition interrupted them with cries that theirs were English speeches. Two particulars are memorable, in regard to the debate. It was declared, without contradiction, that all practical annoyance under the provision for Search, had occurred during Lord Palmerston's term of office; and that, since Lord Aberdeen succeeded him, there had been none. And M. Guizot avowed that the chances of peace were improving every day; that a more just feeling towards England was beginning to prevail; and that the moderation and patience of the Cabinet of London, as well as that of Paris, was constantly imparting solidity to the relations of the two countries. And yet, this was at a time when the warfare of the press was the most violent. The French journals were emulated in their spirit of animosity and their power of provoking by a London paper, the 'Morning Chronicle'; whose tone was resented by the English public as a disgrace in which the national character ought not to be implicated. The general impression, at home and in France, was that the war articles in the 'Morning Chronicle' were Lord Palmerston's. Whether they were his or another's, they were as mischievous as they were otherwise indefensible.

Annual Register, 1843, p. 269.

Annual Register, 1843, p. 290.

Annuaire His., 1849, p. 9.

In the sessions of 1843 and 44, the French legislators had resolved that the commerce of the country should be replaced under the sole *surveillance* of the national flag: in 1845, M. Guizot avowed that the provisions of the treaty against the slave trade had lost much of their force, and tended to impair the amity of the two nations: and that he hoped that the desired end might yet be reached by means perfectly safe. In truth, the Right of Search question was by this time put out of sight by new quarrels of so fierce a character, that the King declared, in his speech before the Chambers, that the good understanding of his government with England had at one time appeared in imminent danger of fatal interruption.

Death of the Duke of Orleans.

Royal Visits.

Annual Register, 1844, Chron. 119.

Annuaire His. 1845, p. 3.

And yet, events had happened which seemed almost inevitably to preclude hostile feelings, and the superficial irritability of minds not sufficiently occupied. The interest of our Queen, and of every member of her government, and of every good heart every where, was engaged on behalf of the unhappy King of the French and of his family, by an event which occurred in July, 1842. The Duke of Orleans, the heir of the French throne, was thrown out of a carriage and killed. The deep grief of the aged father and of the fond mother was respected throughout Europe; and all hard thoughts must have been dismissed during the mournful period when the question of the regency was in course of settlement. The Duke de Nemours, the next brother of the Duke of Orleans, was to be regent during the minority of the Count de Paris. This settled, the King prosecuted other plans for the security of the throne from which his family was so soon to pass. In 1843, two more of his children married;—the Princess Clementine being united to Prince Augustus of Saxe Coburg, and the Duke de Joinville to a Brazilian Princess, sister of the Emperor of the Brazils and of the Queen of Portugal. In September of the same year, Queen Victoria and her husband visited the King and Queen of the French at their country seat, the Chateau d'Eu; and the warmth of their demonstrations of friendship, and the fervour with which the people cheered our young sovereign wherever she appeared, seemed to indicate that the war spirit had either never been widely prevalent or had died out. The visit was returned in the autumn of the next year, when Louis Philippe was received with a welcome as hearty as his people had offered to our Queen. The King lost no opportunity of saying—and it was as late as the 13th of October when he finally spoke the words with emphasis—that the aim and object of his policy had ever been a cordial amity with Great Britain: yet, in the royal Speech of the 26th of December, the King admitted that difficulties which might have become of the most serious importance had risen up between the British government and his own. Discussions had been entered into which appeared to endanger the relations of the two states. These were gentle words indicating a perilous quarrel.

Tahiti.

The island once called Otaheite, and thus so well known to the readers of Cook's Voyages, and now called Tahiti, had for some years been a British missionary station; and the Queen of the island, named Pomare, had been a religious pupil of our missionaries there. In September, 1842, Queen Pomare placed her dominions under the protection of France, by a treaty dated on the 9th of that month. Her subjects were not pleased. Some said she had been coerced to do the deed, through fear of the French admiral, Dupetit Thouars,

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who hovered about her dominions. However this might be, the natives were vexed, and showed hostility to the French; and the French naturally and immediately concluded that English intrigue was at the bottom of the discontent. The Admiral appeared off the island in November 1843, and required Queen Pomare to hoist the French flag over her own, or instead of it; and, on her refusal to do so, he landed troops, hauled down her flag, and made proclamation that the island belonged to France. Of the indefensible character of this act there can be no doubt: and the French government lost no time in disowning it. There was, however, a party in the Chamber, as well as outside, who, in the heat of animosity against England, declared that French honour would be wounded by the removal of the national flag set up by the Admiral; while others alluded to the utility of having a piece of French territory in that part of the world. In the debate brought on by this party, M. Guizot defended the conduct of Queen Pomare, declared that of England to be blameless and pacific, and severely censured the French admiral. When the English Ministers were questioned in parliament about the French treaty with Pomare, they had always said that they had nothing to object to it; that perfect religious liberty was assured by the treaty, and that the arrangement might probably be for the benefit of the inhabitants of the whole group of islands. Lord Aberdeen had obtained from Paris assurances that the British missionaries would meet with all possible protection and encouragement. When the news of the aggression of the French admiral arrived, there was hardly time for any speculation before the disavowal of the French government was communicated. But, on the 29th of July, 1844, news was received which brought out stronger language from Sir R. Peel and Lord Aberdeen than they had often used in parliament.

M. Carné, Feb. 29.

Hansard, lxviii. l. 42.

A missionary, named Pritchard, had become British Consul at Tahiti, some time before the arrival of Admiral Dupetit Thouars. When Queen Pomare was deposed, Mr. Pritchard resigned his office; but there had not yet been time for his resignation to be accepted; and he acted as Consul till a reply arrived from England. He was supposed by the French to have fostered the discontents of the natives; and he was outraged accordingly by the leading commanders on the station. A French sentinel having been attacked and disarmed by the natives on the night of the 2nd of March, Mr. Pritchard was seized "in reprisal," imprisoned, and released only on condition of his leaving the Pacific. He was carried away, without having seen his family, and reached England by way of Valparaiso. The British Ministers declared in parliament that the account was scarcely credible—so impossible did it seem that such an outrage should have been offered under the circumstances: but the reply of the French government to the remonstrances of England would soon arrive, when, no doubt, it would appear that the French King and his Ministers would be as eager to disavow this act as that of dethroning the Queen of Tahiti. After some little delay, the Ministers announced, on the last day of the session, September 5th, that the affair was satisfactorily settled—the French government being willing to make pecuniary recompense to Mr. Pritchard for the wrongs he had suffered. It would have been well if all had followed the lead of Sir R. Peel in declining to discuss the merits or demerits of Mr. Pritchard. Whatever his conduct might have been, whether wise or

Annual Register, 1844, p. 261.

Spectator, 1844, p. 724.

Spectator, 1844, p. 846.

foolish, peaceable or irritating, the only question was whether he, as a British subject, had been outraged. He had; and reparation was made. But there were citizens in England and France who tried to make a cause of quarrel out of the demeanour of the man; with regard to which there could be no impartial evidence, and which had nothing to do with the affair. And again, the persons who thought France would be dishonoured by the removal of a flag which should never have been set up, were very capable of saying that French honour would suffer by making reparation to a man who was now doubly disliked because he had been injured. Thus, the state of feeling during the latter months of 1844 was such as to warrant the expressions of the King's speech in December.

Spanish Question.

Already other storm clouds were showing themselves on the horizon.—Ever since the accession of the young Queen Isabella, there had been a rivalship between French and English influence in Spain. The Regent Christina was a relation of the Orleans family, and some jealousy was excited by their friendly manners towards her. When she abdicated the regency in the autumn of 1840, leaving her daughter in the care of Espartero, she fled into France, repairing first to Marseilles, as if on her way to Naples, but presently turning her face towards Paris, after receiving letters thence. She was met by the King himself outside the city, and received with military honours; and almost every newspaper in Europe detailed the particulars of a reception which was supposed to signify so much: and in the French Chambers the government was called to account for permitting a course of action which would throw Spain into the arms of England. M. Guizot replied that France would faithfully support, if necessary, the throne of Isabella II., but would have nothing to do with the intestinal quarrels of Spain, and would receive any refugees in the way she thought proper.—It was from Paris that Queen Christina wrote, in the ensuing summer, to claim the guardianship of her children, when the Cortes were in the act of appointing guardians. She had said, in a Manifesto from Marseilles, "I have laid down my sceptre, and given up my daughters:" and the after-thought by which she revoked these words was believed every where to be a suggestion of King Louis Philippe's. That after-thought was the cause of various risings in Spain. The Madrid insurrection terrified the poor children almost to death. They were on their knees in the innermost chamber of the palace while it was besieged by night, and nothing but the bravery of the halberdiers prevented the royal children from being seized. The insurgents used the name of Christina: she at first denied their right to do so, and then prevaricated to a degree which induced a general belief that she was employing her position at Paris to overthrow the existing regency of Spain: a belief which, of course, set the English government closely on the watch.

Annuaire Hist. 1841, p. 4.

Annual Register, 1841, p. 264.

In 1843, the Regent Espartero and his party fell into adversity, amidst the changing fortunes of civil war. Espartero and his family escaped to England, where their welcome was cordial. The Lord Mayor and Corporation of London invited the Regent to a public dinner at the Mansion House. The King of the French did not appear to resent this. In his Speech at the close of the year, he expressed his deep interest in the young Queen of Spain, on occasion of her having been declared of age while yet only 13 years old;

Annual Register, 1843, p. 298.

expressed hope that Spain would be in a more tranquil condition henceforward; and avowed that this hope was much strengthened by the perfect understanding which subsisted between the Queen of England and himself.

In January, 1844, M. Guizot made disclosures of great importance in regard to the relations between France and England. After showing that during a recent visit of the Duke de Bourdeaux to London, under the name of the Comte de Chambord, no manifestations had been made in the least unfriendly to the existing government of France, he turned to the subject of Spain. He avowed that an honest and friendly appeal had been made to the English government, which had been responded to in a manner no less honest and friendly;—an appeal as to whether there was really any occasion for the rivalship of the two interests on the soil of Spain; whether there was any substantial ground for such rivalship; whether it was not in truth a struggle kept up merely as a matter of custom and tradition. This being admitted, an agreement had ensued that all considerations should henceforth give way before the great object of securing the tranquillization and prosperity of Spain.—The two Cabinets had gone further still in their discussions and agreements. They had treated of the marriage of Isabella II.; and England had consented that no Prince whose connexion with the Spanish throne could be injurious to France should be permitted to marry the young Queen.

Annuaire Hist. p. 25.

Spanish Marriages.

Annual Register, 1843, p. 304.

The first mention we meet with of the marriage of Isabella II. is in 1843, in the form of a disclaimer by the government which drove out Espartero of any intention of carrying the Queen towards the Portuguese frontier, as had been reported, for the sake of marrying her to a Prince of the family of Saxe Coburg Cohary, then on a visit to Lisbon. From the time of M. Guizot's speech of January, 1844, the Queen's marriage was the prominent point of all discussions on Spain. In March, Christina returned to Spain, and was met by her daughters on the road to Madrid. On the 23rd, they all entered Madrid in state. A vulture had hovered over the head of Espartero, it was said, when he last quitted it. Now, when Christina was re-entering it, a dove flew into the carriage, and was taken to her bosom by the little Queen. Subsequent events sadly discredited the omen. In October, when a Bill for retrenching the chief safeguards and most liberal provisions of the Constitution was brought forward, a clause was found in it which authorized the Queen to marry without the consent of the Cortes: and at the same time, rumours went forth, assuming to be from authority, that it had been settled among the royal family of Spain, that the Queen should marry the Prince of Asturias, the son of Don Carlos.—At the same time, again (on the 13th of October), Christina married the man whose mistress she had been for seven years, and by whom she had several children. Her marriage now involved questions, both political and pecuniary, of great consequence; questions as to the date at which, by this connexion, she had forfeited her office of regent, and her annual allowance from the State, and her title of Queen Mother. The money and the title were now secured to her by special grants and decrees. But the question remained how the consent of the Pope to this marriage had been obtained; and whether, in fact, it had been obtained at all. While all this was discussed, the new Ministers were frightened into altering their Bill so far as to continue the exclusion of the family of Don Carlos from connexion with the throne of

Spectator, 1844 p. 318.

1841—46. Spain: but this act was again neutralized by what the Pope had done. It came out that he had permitted the marriage of Christina on certain conditions, one of which was that all laws and decrees should be annulled which excluded the family of Don Carlos; and another, that Queen Isabella should marry the Prince of Asturias.—In six months more, Don Carlos had resigned all claims to the Crown, in favour of his son. But this had no effect in forwarding any views as to the marriage of the Prince with the Queen: for, before the end of the year, all the world had heard that negotiations were proceeding for a marriage of the Queen with the Prince de Trappani, brother to the King of Naples and Christina, and therefore uncle to the Queen. But it soon appeared that nobody desired this marriage. The young girl herself disliked the Prince; her mother opposed his pretensions; and there was no strong feeling abroad in the nation on his behalf. It was conjectured that the Queen would herself have chosen her cousin Don Enrique, the second son of Don Francisco de Paula—a spirited young naval officer: but, when the Prime Minister, General Narvaez, was questioned in the Cortes, in January, 1846, he declared that the Queen appeared to have no wish to marry, and that the subject had not come under the consideration of the government at all.—Other governments were more anxious: and none involved itself so deeply as that of France.

Spectator, 1844, p. 1038.

Annual Register, 1846, p. 283.

A despatch of M. Guizot's, written in 1842, was in existence, which declared that all that France desired, in regard to the marriage of the Queen of Spain, was that she should take a husband from the House of Bourbon. The French princes might be set aside and welcome: an ample choice would remain among the families of the King of Naples, of Don Francisco de Paula, and Don Carlos. Only let it be a Bourbon: and that was enough. In February, 1846, however, we find the same Minister speaking in a very different tone to Lord Aberdeen, through the French Minister in London. M. Guizot now declared that, for reasons assigned, no prince of the above-mentioned families could be the choice of the parties concerned; and he intimated that any intrigue to marry the Queen to a Prince of the House of Saxe Coburg would be resisted by France. There was a Prince of that House whom the French government supposed that England was plotting to get married to the Queen: and henceforth the relations between France and England became so unfriendly as to threaten war more seriously than at any time since the Peace. Lord Palmerston returned to the Foreign Office in the summer; and from that moment, the controversy became painful and disgusting. It is not necessary for us to go through the disagreeable narrative, as our History closes at the date of the retirement of Lord Aberdeen. Suffice it that, blind to coming events which were soon to sweep away all the plans, and dissolve all the visions, of ambition, the French King and his Ministers made a bold push to place one of their own princes in close proximity to the Spanish throne, for the chance of his issue succeeding to it, whilo the wretched young Queen was forced into a marriage with the elder brother of the Don Enrique whom she was supposed to favour. Her younger sister, aged 14, was married on the same day to the Duke de Montpensier, the youngest son of the King of the French. The English newspapers were furious in their wrath, as well as strong in their indignation, at the part acted by France. The fear was lest the crowns of

Annual Register, 1846, p. 284.

France and Spain should ever be found on the same head. But this could not happen by any chance short of the death of all the Duke de Montpensier's elder brothers and their children, together with failure of issue from the Queen of Spain. Events have since happened which solemnly rebuke so presumptuous a forecast into the future, by removing the young bridegroom's family from the throne of France. The fury of dissension which prevailed during the controversy looks now childish enough. The true cause for regret is the paltering and shabbiness exhibited on the part of the French government in the conduct of the business, and the fidgettiness and heat of the British Minister (Lord Palmerston), about an affair which was not worth contesting at the risk of war between the two countries to whose keeping are confided the liberties of Europe. No possible question about the future descent of the Spanish crown can be worth the discord of free States, on the verge of the outbreak of the War of Opinion in Europe. It was understood that the compulsion brought to bear on the young Queen by her mother, under French encouragement, was very cruel; and the marriage presently appeared before the world as an unhappy one. The two weddings took place on the 10th of October, 1846; and at the end of the month, the French King received at his palace his little daughter-in-law—the Spanish princess whom he had won into his family at the expense of the friendship of the Queen and people of England. "Men say," declared a newspaper of that date, "that Louis Philippe has sown the wind: time will show whether he or his successor will reap the revolutionary whirlwind."

Jerrold's Weekly Newspaper, 1846, p. 325.

During the period before us, changes had taken place among the royal races of France, while the people were carried on by the action of the government, slowly but surely, towards that revolutionary struggle which has since abased some of them, and exalted another, and created some new hope in a third party. The Duke d'Angoulême, who had for a large portion of his life expected to reign over France, died in 1844, and left his nephew, the Duke de Bordeaux, the sole representative of the claims of the elder Bourbons. The Prince who had before troubled France with unsupported pretensions to the throne, as nephew of the Emperor—Prince Louis Napoleon—made a descent on Boulogne in August, 1840, even more absurd than the Strasburg attempt; and received, as his retribution for his contemptible invasion of a kingdom, an imprisonment in the fortress of Ham, whence he escaped, after a seclusion of six years, in the dress of a workman. Though no wisdom had thus far marked his proceedings, it may finally be proved of some importance to France that his life was not taken on an occasion which would have justified the sentence in the eyes of the world.—In the same year, the remains of his uncle, the Emperor, were brought from St. Helena, under the care of one of the Orleans princes, and solemnly buried in the Hotel des Invalides, in the presence of all Paris—the Orleans family paying all the honours personally.

Death of the Duke d'Angouleme.

Boulogne Invasion.

Annuaire Hist. 1840, p. 307.

Napoleon's Remains.

Annuaire Hist. 1840, Chron. 314.

Algeria.

The African conquests of France still yielded more trouble and cost than glory or gain: and to the dark side of the account was now to be added shame, deep and ineffaceable. The native Arabs and Moors were no nearer being conquered than ever; and the noble defender of his race and religion, the Emir Abd-el-Kader, a hero worthy of any country and any age, was still the invincible foe of the invaders. In the belief that he was countenanced by the Emperor of Morocco, the French made war upon that potentate, and the

1841—46. Prince de Joinville bombarded Tangier on the 6th of August, 1844, in spite of the preventive efforts of Mr. Hay, the British Chargé d'Affaires in that place. No results of importance ensued; for which various causes were assigned by French writers: but all agree that England interfered to promote peace, on terms as favourable to Morocco as could be obtained.—Abd-el-Kader meantime was as restless as ever, incessantly harassing the French force, without receiving any injury in return. Perhaps the exasperation of the French commanders in Algeria from this cause might be the influence which so turned the brain of one of them as to induce him to stain the glory of the French arms by an act of atrocity unequalled in modern times. There was a tribe of Kabyle Arabs which had never been conquered, because they retired upon a rocky district perforated with caverns. Colonel Pelissier roasted and suffocated this tribe in their retreat by kindling fires at the entrance. When escape was first offered them, on condition of surrender, they refused; and such of the women as attempted to fly were shot by their husbands, who considered it a case of martyrdom for religion. They, and their families, and their cattle—500 human beings found dead, and more who died when taken out—were roasted or suffocated. But Europe found a voice on their behalf. A cry of reprobation ran over all civilized countries. In France, however, the Chronicler of the times offers only a very brief comment. "Such," he says, "are the necessary consequences of a war incessantly rekindled by fanaticism."

Annuaire Hist. 1845, p. 252.

In seeking to determine the position held by France in regard to the conflict now beginning between the Eastern despotic, and the Western self-governing principle, it is indispensable to consider the view propounded by the Foreign Minister of France in the critical period of 1842. However M. Guizot may have afterwards stooped from his declared position, and lost sight of a broad theory of European policy in a low pursuit of selfish and fantastical national ambition, at the bidding of a man unworthy to be obeyed by such an one as he, he spoke in 1842 from his own mind and heart—and his view ought to remain on record. France had come out of the isolation in which she stood at the time of the Brunow Convention, and was again placed in friendly relations with the other Four Powers, when, on the 19th of January, 1842, M. Guizot said in the Chamber of Deputies, "Some are alarmed at the words 'European concert.' But do those words mean that the Holy Alliance is revived? No. That which is called European concert is simply the spirit of peace among the great Powers. It is the manifestation of that accordant mind which, in case of any critical event occurring, would endeavour to understand and resolve the great political question, before having recourse to the chances of war.—It is to this policy that, for more than twenty years, Europe has been indebted for peace. It is to this policy that Greece and Belgium owe their existence. Never before were mighty events accomplished so pacifically, and conducted so regularly, by negotiation alone, under the influence of European good sense.—There are but three political systems possible for any country: alliance, isolation, or independence in the midst of good understanding. For intimate alliances, the time is passed. As for the policy of isolation, it is a transitory policy which is connected with a position more or less critical and revolutionary. It is necessarily adopted on occasion, but should never be reduced into a system. Besides, an intimate alliance between France and

M. Guizot in 1842.

Annuaire Hist. 1842, p. 17.

England involves the inconvenience of cementing the alliance between the Three great continental Powers. The policy of isolation involves the yet greater inconvenience of inducing the alliance of the Four great Powers. There remains then the policy of independence in the midst of amity—and this is the policy upon which France has entered."

In another view, France left herself free to form alliances hereafter as future events might indicate.

American relations.

The relations of England with the United States were as precarious as those with France, during this period.—First, there was a dispute arising out of the Canadian troubles of 1837. A steam-boat, the Caroline, belonging to an American owner, had conveyed arms and stores to a party of Canadian insurgents on Navy Island. Some loyalists seized the vessel, and sent her down the Falls of Niagara; and, in the scuffle, an American citizen was killed. One McLeod, a British subject, was arrested when transacting business in the State of New York, charged with participation in the destruction of the Caroline, and in the murder of Durfee, the slain man. The British Minister protested against the process, declaring the act to have been done in obedience to the Colonial authorities, and therefore to be a subject for explanation between the two governments, and not for the trial of an individual in the Courts of Law. The British government did fully assume the responsibility of the act of destroying the Caroline: but not for this would the American authorities liberate McLeod. A popular assemblage overawed the magistrates when they were about to release him on bail: and this complicated the affair perilously. So did the Report of a Committee of Congress on the question, which was little short of a declaration of war; but it was presently understood that the Report had had the concurrence of a bare majority in Committee.—The next difficulty was that the State of New York claimed to try the prisoner for offences committed against the State citizens, instead of those of the Union; and thus, the question, as between the two governments, was evaded. McLeod was tried, at Utica in the State of New York. Fortunately, there was unquestionable evidence of McLeod's absence from the scene of the destruction of the Caroline. The plea of an *alibi* was too strong to be withstood; the jury returned a verdict of acquittal, and the danger was over for the time.—Some foolish Canadians, however, did what they could to embroil us afresh. They made an incursion into the United States' territory, and seized a Colonel Grogan, whom they accused of incendiary outrage: but the Canadian authorities ordered the instant discharge of Colonel Grogan; and no more was heard of the matter. It remained a subject of serious uneasiness to both governments, however, that outrages were perpetually taking place on the frontier. The Canadian loyalists were insulting and violent; the American adventurers who infested the boundary delighted in raids and skirmishes; and the federal government had not power to restrain them—owing to certain limitations of its functions, and a partition of power between itself and the States along the frontier. Every one was aware that, under the difficulties of the case, much would depend on the character and temper of the President of the republic. General Harrison entered upon the office in March of this year, 1841; but, before any clear anticipation could be formed of his temper and policy, he died; only four weeks after his entrance upon office.—By the re-

The Frontier.

Mr. Fox's Note of March 12th.

Annual Register, 1841, p. 317.

American Presidents.

Annual Register, Chron. 194.

1841—46. gulation provided for such a possible case, he was succeeded in his function by the Vice-President, Mr. Tyler; and it remained to be seen how the affairs of the States would go on under the rule (for the first time) of a President who had not been elected to that office by the people.

Right of Search.

The Right of Search question was becoming a cause of controversy before the McLeod affair was settled: and now the controversy was fast growing into a quarrel. The American Minister in London maintained that the right existed only under certain treaties; and that countries which, like the United States, had refused participation in such treaties, could not permit their vessels to be searched for evidence of traffic in slaves, or on any other pretence. Lord Palmerston had, before going out of office, admitted this, but shown that the difficulty arose from slavers hoisting, unauthorized, any flag that might suit their purpose best. All that was claimed was—not a right to search American merchantmen, but merely to examine their ships' papers, to ascertain whether they really were American vessels. Without this, there could be no security against the slave-traffic of the world being carried on under the flags of those countries which did not participate in the treaties. It will be seen what a wide field of international law was extended for argumentation when Lord Aberdeen came into office.—In the following December, Lord Aberdeen communicated to the American Minister the nature of the instructions given to British cruisers; and the frank and temperate explanations of the two Ministers led to happy results. The President said of them, in a message to the Representatives, "These declarations may well lead us to doubt whether the apparent difference between the two governments is not rather one of definition than of principle." And again, "It seems obvious to remark, that a right which is only to be exercised under such restrictions and precautions, and risk, in case of any assignable damage to be followed by the consequences of a trespass, can scarcely be considered any thing more than a privilege asked for, and either conceded or withheld on the usual principles of international comity." The President's lead was followed by Congress. Congress agreed that the honour of the American flag "demanded that it should not be used by others to cover an iniquitous traffic:" and, like the President, Congress "chose to make a practical settlement of the question." And thus, without any concession being made on the side of Great Britain, but only by means of her object becoming better understood, it was settled that, on any fair occasion of suspicion whether the United States' flag was shown rightfully or as a pretence, she might require the production of the ship's papers, under the liability of making reparation for damage or delay, if the vessel should be found to be really American. The Americans also agreed to keep a squadron off the coast of Africa, to guard against abuse of the American flag. And thus, in the spring of 1843, was the Right of Search question settled with the United States.

Annual Register, 1842, p. 309.

Annual Register, 1843, p. 318.

Affair of "The Creole." Spectator, 1842, p. 49.

Some complications had occurred in the course of the controversy which threatened to prevent its amicable adjustment. A Virginian brig, called the Creole, was on its way to New Orleans in October, 1841, when some slaves, who formed part of the cargo, obtained possession of the ship, wounded the captain and some of the crew, killed a passenger who was the owner of some of their number, and then carried the vessel to Nassau, in New Providence,

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one of the West India islands. On the requisition of the American Consul, the magistrates of Nassau detained and imprisoned nineteen negroes who were charged with participation in the mutiny and murder. The rest, 114 in number, against whom there was no charge, were allowed to go where they would, under the British law that every slave becomes free on touching British soil. The Governor of the Bahamas refused to detain them, and also to forward the nineteen to America till he received directions from home. The law officers and law peers of England gave an unanimous opinion that there was no law of the empire under which the persons charged could be tried or even detained; and the Governor of Nassau was therefore instructed to release the nineteen negroes, unless there was any peculiar colonial law under which they could be tried. The wrath of some of the Slave States was loud; and there was talk of bloody consequences: but our newspapers said throughout, "we shall not need to go to war about the Creole:" and so it proved. The American requisition was withdrawn, and the slave-holders grew tired, at last, of charging Great Britain with abetting piracy and murder.

Hansard, lx. 320.

REPEAL SYMPATHY.

There was much ruffling of temper on other subjects. A great number of Americans, who did not understand our politics, "sympathized" with the Irish repealers, sent money, promised men, and avowed themselves ready to abet treason on behalf of Ireland to any extent. On the other hand, a great number of Englishmen, who did not understand American affairs, grossly insulted the whole American nation on account of the delinquency of a very small number in the semi-barbarous States, about their State finances. Three of these semi-barbarous States repudiated their public debts: and Pennsylvania and one more delayed the payment of their dividends. Pennsylvania never repudiated, though, following a mistake of Sydney Smith's, people in London supposed and said that she did. Such persons knew nothing of the peculiarities of the half-German population of Pennsylvania, ignorant and slow; and forgot the unequalled pressure and perplexity she had been subjected to by the action of President Jackson on the Banks, and the consequent extinction of her currency for a time. They knew nothing of the miseries of the inhabitants, when reduced to a state of barter: and in this condition of ignorance they charged her with a "repudiation" which her subsequent payments have shown her not to have contemplated. If it is said that people in London could not be expected to know these things, the answer is plain;—that they should not invest their money in foreign funds without understanding the circumstances of the case; nor accept extraordinary interest for their investment without being prepared for a corresponding risk. The New England States, which head the Union, have ever preserved an unblemished honour; and so have most of the rest. The few which have not were unfit to be trusted, and might have been known to be so by any one who understood what the border States are, with the institution of Slavery on the one hand, and the wilds of the Mississippi on the other; and within them, a population largely composed of persons who prefer a semi-barbarous to a highly civilized state of society. But, in the wrath of British claimants on certain State funds at the failure of their dividends, the thirty States and the whole American nation were mixed up together under a charge of cool knavery; and the temper of both nations was any thing but ameliorated. Some men who ought to have known better

REPUDIATION.

were for petitioning Congress about an affair of State debts, with which Congress had no more concern than the parliament of any other country: and it could not be very soothing to the temper of the Americans to find that our clergymen, members of parliament, and merchants, did not take the trouble to learn even the outlines of the American Constitution.

Texas and Mexico.

Then, in 1843 and 1844, public sentiment in England was awake and alive on the subject which was dividing the American nation—the Annexation of Texas, followed by the invasion of Mexico. Dr. Channing was revered in England; his words went far and sank deep; and his reprobation of the annexation of Texas obtained a response from end to end of Great Britain. The noblest part of the American nation rejoiced in our sympathy, and in our perception that the action of their country upon Texas and Mexico was purely for the extension of Slavery; a safeguard for the institution now so shaken towards the north; and a new field for its support, in preparation for its abolition in the States which it had exhausted and impoverished. But the noble are always the few; and every expression of censure or disgust at the game that was playing against the interests of humanity kindled wrath among the majority in the States who were eager for the excitement of war, and the glory of territorial aggrandisement.

Boundary Question.

While such was the temper of the two peoples towards each other, a question of more difficulty and more importance than any yet discussed had arisen between the two governments. It has been noticed before how surely trouble springs up, sooner or later, from the ignorance of geography which prevails when the boundaries of new countries are assigned. The frontier line between the State of Maine and Canada could not be agreed upon by the British and the Americans, when the region became settled. It was a matter of high importance to the residents of the debated ground whether they lived under British or American government and laws; and in the existing temper of the two nations, it appeared too probable that not only skirmishes would take place along the frontier, but that a national war might ensue. Sober people in England, now quieted and made reasonable by a quarter of a century of peace, could hardly conceive of such a thing as a national war for such a cause: but it appears that the statesmen on both sides the Atlantic really apprehended such an issue. In 1839, Lord Palmerston had sent out Commissioners to explore the line claimed by the British, and see whether it accorded with the features of the country: and, after these Commissioners had reported, two more were sent out to make a similar investigation into the line claimed by the Americans. Their Report, in 1841, was adverse to the American claim. Arbitration had before been tried, and had failed. The King of the Netherlands had pronounced on two points out of three, and declared the other impossible to settle. He had determined that the British were right as to which was the true river-head specified, and what the proper parallel of latitude: but as to which of two ranges of Highlands was intended, there was no evidence to show. After some confusion, both parties declined the award. And thus, there was no reason to hope any thing from arbitration. In this perplexity, Sir R. Peel's government chose the fittest man in Great Britain for the business, and sent him out as a special ambassador to Washington, fully empowered to settle all matters in dispute between the two govern-

Hansard, lxiii. 564.

ments. Lord Ashburton, late Mr. Baring, a thorough Englishman in mind and manners, was yet so connected with America by commercial and family relations as to have much sympathy with American feelings, and full knowledge of American institutions, customs, and modes of thought. He went out in February 1842, was courteously and even joyfully received, and brought matters round presently. A treaty which settled the Boundary question was signed on the 9th of August following. It was not to be supposed that every body was satisfied. Lord Palmerston, for one, was sure to be displeased; and his prophecies of the dissatisfaction that would be felt, and the mischiefs that would arise, were very strong. But no difficulties have as yet been heard of; and the inestimable good of peace and national amity appears to have been obtained without sacrifice. The agreement gave 7-12ths of the disputed ground, and the British settlement of Madawaska to the United States, and only 5-12ths of the ground to Britain: but it secured a better military frontier to England, and it included heights commanding the St. Lawrence which the award of the King of Holland had assigned to the Americans. The best testimony to the equality of the arrangements was the amount of discontent among American politicians being about equivalent to that declared in England. But in both countries, the vast majority were satisfied and gratified; and the chances against war appeared to be stronger than for several years past. Lord Ashburton, after having been honoured throughout every step of his travels in the United States, received the thanks of Parliament on his return home.

Lord Ashburton's Mission.

Hansard, lxvii. 1242.

Hansard, lxviii. 641.

All danger was not over, however. It has been mentioned before that in 1822 Lord Castlereagh told Mr. Rush that such was the condition of the Oregon question between England and the United States, that war could be produced by holding up a finger. Now, after the lapse of twenty years, the question was as unsettled, and almost as perilous, as ever. It may be remembered that an agreement was made in the treaty 1818-1819, that for a period of ten years the Oregon territory should be open to occupation by settlers from both countries. The period was afterwards indefinitely extended. In 1843, the American President announced that he was going to negotiate with Great Britain for the final settlement of their claims to the Oregon territory. A push was immediately made in Congress to get Oregon occupied and put under military organization, as territory belonging to the United States; and the restless among the vivacious American nation began to form and equip caravans for the long and dreary passage to Oregon, over and beyond the Rocky Mountains. They acted as if their national existence depended on their appropriating the whole available coast of the Pacific, and as if there were no rashness in tempting a crowd of emigrants to cross a desert continent, among myriads of buffaloes and through tribes of hostile Indians, to take possession of a district whose capabilities and conveniences were little known, and which might prove to be the property of a foreign power. Such rashness and indecent haste made the question of settlement more difficult,—British statesmen being disgusted, and American statesmen ashamed, without being able freely to say so. In the course of several conferences between the negotiators on each side in 1844, it was understood that the matter should be settled by compromise,—by dividing the territory lying

Oregon Question.

Ante, i. 311.

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1841—46. along the Columbia river. The new President, Mr. Polk, avowed his dislike to any surrender whatever of the American claim; but declared that it was too late when he entered upon office to draw back from the compromise principle; a declaration which made the majority on both sides of the Atlantic rejoice that that much was agreed upon before Mr. Polk became President. Throughout the session of 1845 the debates in Congress on the subject of Oregon were so conducted as apparently to impair grievously the chances of peace. But it is probable that their very violence wrought in the other direction. Statesmen (worthy of the name) on both sides were better aware what they were about than boastful and quarrelsome orators; and the more arrogance and rancour that were expressed, the more were the negotiators stimulated to find a basis of agreement.

In his Message of December, 1845, the American President used language of dogmatism, if not defiance, which some members of the Senate declared themselves unable to agree to. In the next month, Queen Victoria said, in her Speech to Parliament, that she regretted the unsettled state of the Oregon question, and that no effort consistent with national honour should be wanting on her part to bring the controversy to an early and peaceful termination. With these speeches before them, the American Houses of Congress went into debate. The debates were protracted through three months, ending on the 23rd of April, with a signal and somewhat unexpected victory of the moderate party. With a view to driving on the matter to a decision by force, the war party had carried Resolutions that notice of the cessation of a joint occupancy of Oregon should be given to Great Britain. After a conference, it was settled that the Resolution about such notice should stand, being accompanied by a declaration that it was for the purpose of inducing a speedy amicable settlement of the dispute, on the ground of an equitable compromise. As soon as the news of this Resolution arrived in England, Lord Aberdeen sent out a new proposal of compromise to our minister at Washington. The President submitted the proposal to the Senate, who approved it by a large majority. The President then accepted the terms; and in June, the treaty was signed which settled at last the Oregon question. Vancouver's Island remained to Great Britain, and the free navigation of the Columbia; and the territory in dispute was divided in a way which appears likely to be permanently satisfactory to both parties. Mr. Webster, indeed, avows his anticipation that the combined population of Americans and British, similar in race and separated only by national distribution, will set up for themselves ere long, and form a Republic on the Pacific. However that may be, they are no longer at war, or in anticipation of it. This happy act of reconciliation was one of the last to be perfected by Sir R. Peel's government, and the ultimate success of Lord Aberdeen's mild and discreet administration of our foreign affairs.

Hansard, lxxxiii. 3.

Annual Register, 1846, p. 326.

Annual Register, 1846, p. 327.

CHAPTER XIII.

1845-46.

INDIA.

IN the records of Indian affairs during this period we find a curious mingling of notices;—the formation of companies for the construction and management of railways, which are to encourage commerce and extend peace over the whole of those vast regions; and hints that the British may soon be compelled to interfere in the Punjaub, from the excesses that were perpetrated there against one after another of the rulers who succeeded Runjeet Singh. In 1845, we find the India Company addressing the Governor-General, Sir Henry Hardinge, on the subject of railways, in the evident anticipation that the peninsula may in time be intersected with them, so as completely to change its financial condition, and perhaps the character of its population; and in the same year—towards its close—we see our territory invaded in the north-west, by an army of Sikhs crossing the Sutlej; whether with or without the sanction of the existing government at Lahore, was not immediately known. The Governor-General was in the north-west at the time, having had reason to expect some trouble there: and it was on the 13th of December that the decisive news reached him that a Sikh army had crossed the Sutlej. On the 18th, the battle of Moodkee was fought, under Sir Hugh Gough, when the Sikhs were beaten, but not effectually discomfited. In this battle fell Sir Robert Sale, the hero of Jellalabad; a man whom the whole nation would have been delighted to see enjoying his old age in England, after his long toils and sufferings in the East. Here, however, his left thigh was shattered by a ball, and he soon died of the wound. The next battle, that of Ferozeshah, was rendered remarkable by the circumstance of the Governor-General offering his services to Sir Hugh Gough as second in command; and he actually remained in action in that capacity, conspicuously throughout the day. The foe proved more formidable than had been expected—their skill appearing to equal their hardihood. It was no easy matter to vanquish them; but after the battles on the 21st and 22nd, they were routed, and their guns captured. Our loss was heavy; and even those who believed that the Punjaub was now quieted, and the Sikhs silenced for ever, felt that these results were obtained at a severe cost. But there were not a few who foresaw what has since happened,—new conflicts, and the sad necessity of annexing the Punjaub to our territory, for the sake of peace, and of the safety of the inhabitants of the north-western provinces.

SIKH INVASION.

One more battle—that of Aliwal, fought on the 28th of January, 1846—drove the Sikhs from our territory, and impelled them to take refuge in their last stronghold on the left bank of the Sutlej. From this position they were driven by the battle of Sobraon, on the 10th of February, when the Governor-General was again present under Sir H. Gough. The slaughter on our side was terrible enough; but that of the Sikhs was sickening to hear of. They

1845-46. were drowned in shoals in the river, and shot by hundreds as they attempted to escape into their own territory. They were followed by the British army; and the Governor-General undertook the arrangement of the affairs of the Punjaub. He believed that, by the establishment of a Protectorate, he had avoided the evil of the annexation of the territory. But time has proved him mistaken. The Sikhs have since risen again, and have again been chastised, almost to the point of destruction; and the Punjaub is now British territory.

A part of the work of the last parliamentary session we have to record was voting thanks and welcoming honours to the heroes of the Sikh war—one of the briefest of our Indian wars, but one of the most brilliant. There was much heartiness of admiration on the occasion, but very little joy:—rather, there was so much regret that it was evident that thirty years of European peace had humanized the English mind, and raised it to a point of feeling which becomes a civilized nation compelled to enter the lists of brute conflict with a half-barbarous people.—Sir Henry Hardinge and Sir Hugh Gough were raised to the peerage; and when they and other heroes of the war returned to England, the national welcome awaited them wherever they went.

The Sandwich Islands.

In 1843, the Sandwich islands—the Hawaiian islands, or old Owhyhee—were ceded by their king, Kamehameha, to Great Britain, because the poor sovereign found himself embarrassed by claims of reparation for injury done to British subjects. The cession was not accepted; but our protection was promised to the islands as forming an independent state. It is amusing to find these poor people beginning at once with constitutional government. Their two Houses of parliament—the House of Nobles and House of Representatives—met on the 20th of May, 1845, and the King delivered a speech, the tone of which is ludicrously like such as are delivered in London and Paris. The peculiarities of it are a provision for ascertaining whether the number of the people is increasing or diminishing; and a declaration that it is the possession of the Word of God which has introduced their people into the family of independent nations. The first vote of the Nobles was one of thanks to Great Britain, France, Belgium, and the United States, for recognising the independence of the Hawaiian kingdom. This done, "the Ministers presented their reports and estimates, and the ordinary business of the session commenced." We have been accustomed to think that constitutional government is a gradual and late growth of civilization—a thing impossible to impose, and of which some old European nations are not yet capable. It can hardly be supposed that the Sandwich islanders can maintain it pure: but they will probably be happier than under the despotic rule of an irresponsible king.

Annual Register, 1845, p. 354.

The desire for representative government was spreading among our own colonies. In 1846, ten of them had made application for the boon. There had been much misgovernment; or the colonists thought so. Taxes trebled at a stroke, favouritism towards public officers, or ill-usage of them, quarrels between governors and their coadjutors, tricks with the currency, executive extravagance—such grievances as these in colonies where the inhabitants now amounted to tens of thousands, made the residents desire to try whether they could not govern themselves better than they were governed by the Colonial Office. In Van Diemen's Land, abuses of various kinds had reached such a

Hansard, lxxxviii. 714.

Van Diemen's Land.

pass, that the prosperity of the colony had stopped: and it was sinking into debt, though the taxes had been trebled in one day: and yet there were 35,000 free colonists who were without representation, while several western colonies had a representation before their numbers had reached a sixth part of this. A new governor was sent out to Van Diemen's Land; and it was recommended that the civil officers who had resigned in despair should be restored: but it remains a disgrace to successive governments that the desire of our colonies for participation in the best privileges of the British Constitution can scarcely obtain any attention. Next to Ireland, our colonies continue to be the opprobrium of our empire. In 1846, at the close of the period now under review, our colonies were forty-two, containing a population of 4,674,000. Twenty-five of the forty-two had representation; but most of these had a much smaller population than several colonies which were cruelly oppressed by the arbitrary rule of incapable governors: and the difficulty these had in making their complaints heard by the public at home, and attended to by the government, was such as to bring upon the Colonial Office heavy, but just, imputations of rashness and tyranny. But for the occurrence of some outrageous case now and then, some abuse too gross to be covered up, there was, and still is, little hope of the colonies being so treated as to preserve their affection for the mother country. For whatever reason it is so—whether the business of the Colonial Office has outgrown its machinery, or bad traditions remain in force within it, or the frequent change of Colonial Ministers is fatal to consistent government, or the choice of those Ministers has been eminently unfortunate—whether these or other mischiefs be the cause, it certainly appears that the misgovernment of our colonies has long been so intolerable, that we cannot expect to retain them, unless some speedy and comprehensive reform is carried out.

Hansard, lxxxviii. 716.

SOUTH AUSTRALIA.

One flagrant case of misgovernment, whose excess was of service, was that of South Australia under Governor Gawler, whose extravagant expenditure involved the colony so deeply that it was scarcely hoped that it could ever revive. In 1841, an advance was made from the Treasury at home of no less than £155,000; and the governor was desired to draw no more. He did not obey: his bills were dishonoured: he was removed from office; and his successor, Captain Grey, found that the annual expenditure of the colony was £150,000, while its revenue was only £30,000. The needful sudden reduction of such an expenditure (which Governor Grey soon brought down to £35,000) occasioned great distress in the settlement; and society had almost to be organized afresh. The Treasury at home had to pay £400,000 for the relief of this unfortunate colony.—Some advance towards giving a power of self-government to this colony and that of New South Wales was made in 1842, by an enactment that their Legislative Council should consist partly of members elected by the people; and that, under Royal sanction, a general Assembly, chosen by popular election, might be convened.—South Australia was not a convict colony; but Sydney and Van Diemen's Land were; and they therefore afforded an unsatisfactory ground of argument about colonial government. Claims of a representative system were easily met by displays of the difficulty of popular election in a community consisting largely of criminals: and arbitrary measures are easily and fairly justified on the plea of the untrustworthy character of a large element of the local society. But

Hansard, lxiv. 992.

5 and 6 Vic. c. 76. c. 61.

1845-46.

there is a colony of ours, lying alone in the sea, unconnected even in idea with the transportation system, and with every pre-requisite for a perfect colonial experiment, whose fate shows something of what our colonial government is.

New Zealand.

The New Zealand islands have a climate and soil which point them out for occupancy by British colonists. British emigrants were willing to go; and the inhabitants of New Zealand were eager to have them. The public at home showed an unusual desire to colonize these islands; and a Company was formed for the purpose, in the face of the reluctance of the government which threw every obstacle in the way. The main object of the Company was to make trial of Mr. Wakefield's plan of self-supporting colonization. By this plan, the proceeds of the sale of land are applied to the bringing out labour, in a regulated proportion to the land; and the land and labour are sufficiently concentrated, so as to prevent the ruinous dispersion of inhabitants, and isolation of settlements, which makes colonization mere squatting, as to its social effects, when individuals are allowed to purchase more land than they can use, or to wander away beyond the reach of co-operation. The government adopted no steady principle about claiming the territory; and neither furnished the original colonists with a government, nor allowed them to govern themselves till they could be legislated for. The Governor sent out, Governor Hobson, seemed to think it the main business of himself and his officials to thwart and humble the officers of the Company; and the most flourishing of the young colonies of England was damaged in every way by his influence;—in intercourse with the natives, in financial management, and in the spirits and temper of the settlers. In the summer of 1842, charges against Governor Hobson were transmitted by the colonists to the home government—charges of ruinous extravagance, of permitting his official servants to make unfair selections of land, and of applying £40,000 received for land sales to other purposes than the prescribed one of bringing out labour. Before inquiry could be made, Governor Hobson died, having saddled this colony, meant to be self-supporting, with a debt of £68,000.—Captain Fitzroy was the next governor, and, if possible, a worse than his predecessor. He found he could not keep the expenditure of the colony down to £20,000 a year, though the population was only 15,000: and he resorted to a system of *assignats*. He issued what he called "debentures" to the amount of £15,000—promissory notes down to the value of 2*s*. Complaining that they became "unduly depreciated," he made them a legal tender. While thus tampering with the currency of the colony, he had seriously shaken the security of the landed property of the emigrants by unsettling the terms of their land-purchases from the natives, after the payment had long been made; and further, he proffered a most untimely and pernicious conciliation and sympathy to a party of the natives who had massacred nine of our countrymen in cold blood—tomahawking them after they had laid down their arms; at the same time forbearing to avenge the cutting down of the British flag at the Custom House. Captain Fitzroy was recalled; but not before such a catalogue of offences from ignorance, conceit, and ill-humour, had been recorded against him in the Debates and Committee of Parliament, as makes it a matter of speculation on what principle colonial governors are appointed. After the New Zealand Company, which

Spectator, 1843, p. 56.

Hansard, lxxxi. 722.

Hansard, lxxxi. 665—726.

was held in universal respect, had expended £300,000 of its own capital, and £300,000 more raised on credit, it had not obtained possession of a single acre of its lands: emigrants, who had paid cash for their land in England, could not obtain access to it in the colony, from Captain Fitzroy's refusal to fulfil conditionally an agreement between the government and the Company, in reliance on which the settlers had made their purchases. The Parliamentary Committee of Inquiry reported that the settlers had a clear right, as against the Crown lands, to the fulfilment of this agreement: but they could not get their rights; and, ruined and forlorn, they were taking ship, as they could get a passage, to New South Wales, or Australia, or back to England, to begin the world again without means. Some of those who remained had their houses pulled down and their crops burned by the natives; and the governor did not speak or stir in their behalf, but gave to the aggressors, encouraged by himself, such sympathy as he had. He suppressed the volunteer force raised by the settlers for their own protection, and offered them, in compensation, fifty soldiers to protect a region of 200 miles long, and inhabited by 10,000 persons.—The reserves of land made by the Company for the natives were left unproductive, and nothing done of what would have been done by the Company for their religious improvement and secular instruction; while the governor assumed to take their part against the Company. Some of the worst acts of Captain Fitzroy were approved by the Colonial Office, and others were not rebuked: and it was therefore against the Colonial Secretary, Lord Stanley, and his Office, that the complainants urged their case. "It is, in truth," said Mr. C. Buller, "the history of the war which the Colonial Office has carried on against the colony of New Zealand. Is this an exaggerated expression? What enemy of the British name and race could—what civilized enemy would—have brought such ruin on a British colony? . . . . A great colonial wrong is before you; and indifferent as in general you naturally are to the fortunes of colonists of whom you see nothing, now that such a matter is brought to your attention, show the Colonial Office that it is not wholly uncontrolled, and will not always be allowed to sport with the interests of our countrymen in the colonies."

Not even such treatment as has been detailed could ruin settlements of such natural advantages as those of New Zealand. Governor Grey, who had already won a high character as successor to Governor Gawler, came from Adelaide to try what could be done in New Zealand. He at once repressed and protected the natives, retrenched the expenditure, vindicated the honour of the British flag, and left the settlers as free as possible, to manage their private affairs, and prosper in their own way. And thus, though the colony may not be all that it might have been long ago—all that was hoped when the first ship sailed from our shores for the new land, when a crowd of the foremost men in England gave a parting cheer to the anxious but hopeful emigrants, and when some of the emigrants themselves were from among the first men in England—it is at least a colony of irrepressible and rising fortunes. Its original peculiarity was that it represented a complete and highly-civilized society, a proportion from all ranks, from the kindred of nobles and the bishop down to the hedger and ditcher. Thus is its intellectual and moral welfare secured, as well as its material prosperity. New Zealand is, after all, perhaps, the most promising of British colonies.

Canada. Sir Charles Bagot.

In Canada, Lord Sydenham was succeeded by Sir Charles Bagot, who opened the second Session of the united Canadian parliament on the 8th of September, 1842. He did not find, as Lord Sydenham had anticipated, that every thing was now so settled that affairs would run in grooves, with only a very gentle force to push them. He was obliged to make an immediate choice between two great difficulties; and a source of disturbance was opened up during his short administration which makes our relations with Canada at this day as doubtful as they have ever been.

Two leaders who had been in Opposition in Lord Sydenham's time now found themselves stronger than the government in the Assembly. Mr. Baldwin, the leader of a small liberal party in what was lately Upper Canada, and Mr. Lafontaine, the leader of the French party in what had been Lower Canada, found a large majority to their hand in the Assembly. The Governor-General must now choose between sanctioning the preponderance of this radical party, and governing by the support of the minority in the Assembly. It being now the principle of Canadian government to rule in accordance with the majority of the representatives, he did the thing thoroughly, making Baldwin and Lafontaine his Ministers. He joined with them a cautious and sensible man from Lord Durham's coadjutors—Mr. Daly, whose presence in the Cabinet might be hoped to act as a restraint on any political intemperance. The difficulty which would have embarrassed the administration of Sir C. Bagot, if he had remained in his office, related to compensation for losses sustained in the rebellions. A Bill for compensation for losses suffered by loyalists was so altered in the Assembly as to include losses suffered at the hands of the loyalists—that is, the soldiery, volunteers, and others. Mr. Baldwin proposed and carried this alteration. The sum voted was 40,000*l.*; but no means of raising it were provided. This very important amendment caused little discussion and no apprehension at the time, though it has since appeared too like the running of a mine under the new Canadian constitution which may blow it to pieces. The loyalists of Canada West wanted to have their compensation paid out of the general revenue of the Union: but the now dominant party objected to this, and gave notice that claims on the same fund would be made by sufferers in Canada East. This was so alarming, that the loyalists dropped the subject for the present, and the other party had no wish to revive it—perceiving doubtless how its discussion must renew the conflict of races. Sir Charles Bagot's health presently gave way. Before the end of the year, he was too ill to remain; and he died soon after his return to England.

Compensation Question. Spectator, 1849, p. 297.

Sir Charles T. Metcalfe. Annual Register, 1843, p. 337.

Sir Charles T. Metcalfe succeeded him, in February 1843. The same policy was carried on, and the same Ministry remained in power. The fine qualities of this excellent ruler were known through his government of Jamaica, where he had been sent by Lord Melbourne's Ministry in 1839. For a few months, all appeared to go well; but in the autumn, disputes arose out of a claim made by his Ministry to be consulted about appointments to office, which all agreed to be the prerogative of the crown. The Ministry resigned, in consequence of the refusal of Sir C. Metcalfe to admit their right to be consulted; and the session closed hastily before its business was finished. For some time, there was no Ministry: and when there was, it was a moderate "English" ministry—Mr. Daly and Mr. Draper being the leading representatives in it of the two sections of country. The French party were now in Opposition for nearly four years; and now therefore was the time for settling the affair of the 40,000*l.* The Governor-General and his Cabinet admitted the justice of giving compensation to sufferers of both parties: but the doing it was difficult in the extreme. Instead of charging the money for Canada West on the general revenue, they appropriated to the purpose two local funds which were paid almost entirely by the English in the western province. So far all went well. The trouble was with the other province. A Commissioner was appointed to manage the business, with regard to Canada East:—to manage it, every body thought: but it soon appeared that they had power only to receive claims, and not to decide upon them. The Commissioners applied to the Executive to know how they were to distinguish between claims from rebels, and those proffered by persons not actually involved in the rebellion. The answer was that none were to be excluded but those who had been convicted by law; and when one of the leaders, exiled to Bermuda under Lord Durham's Ordinance, applied personally to the Governor-General to know what he ought to do, the Governor-General desired him to send in his account, reminding him with a smile that he had not been convicted by law, the Ordinance under which he was sent to Bermuda being declared illegal. Still no disturbance arose. But Sir Charles Metcalfe (now made Lord Metcalfe) fell ill, and after fearful sufferings, nobly borne for many months, was compelled to relinquish his government; and he returned to England at the close of 1845, not with the slightest hope of relief, but to make way for a successor adequate to the public service. Honours were showered on him on his return; and, in the midst of the anguish of disease, such a heart as his must have enjoyed the demonstrations of sympathy and respect which met him every where. But, as he said in one of his last replies to addresses, the grave was open at his feet: and he sank into it in the next September, mourned by all parties in Canada, and by the whole political world at home. Lord Cathcart administered the government for nearly a year, till Lord Elgin went out as Governor-General, a few months after the date which closes our History,

Masson's Letter to the Minerve, Mar. 1849.

DEATH OF LORD METCALFE.
Annual Register, 1846. Chron. 282.

The Lafontaine Ministry was restored—the "Daly-Draper Cabinet" having fallen into a minority in the Assembly, and made matters worse by an experiment of a general election. The restored Ministry proceeded in the compensation matter, bringing into the Assembly a Bill by which compensation was to be given to all who were not formally convicted of high treason; and the charge would fall on the general revenues of Canada. Now, by far the larger part of the taxes is paid by others than the French—the French making for themselves the greater number of the commodities which others import—such as sugar, tobacco, and material for clothing. Thus the British party see that taxes paid by themselves, and not by the party claiming compensation, will go to build up the fortunes of those whom they call rebels. Unhappily, there is a wide diversity of opinion as to whether this is an Imperial or a local question. Some say that it is an Imperial question, because it is of the same bearing as a question of amnesty after rebellion. Others look at it as a local quarrel about a matter of finance and party ascendancy. It does not lie within our bounds to discuss this controversy. It is scarcely necessary even to

Spectator, 1849, p. 298.

say, that it has kindled a war of opinions in Canada which seems but too likely to revive the war of races, and endanger the permanence of the policy cemented with the hearts' blood of a succession of devoted rulers.

Fires at Quebec.
Annual Register, 1845, 346—8.

In 1845, misfortunes befel the city of Quebec by which it was reduced to nearly the size that it was when Wolfe fell before it. More than two-thirds of the city were destroyed by fire in the months of May and June. These large fires seldom leave much cause for regret to a subsequent century; as it is usually the primitive, ill-built, unwholesome part of a great city which is devoured by the flames. In this case, it was the wooden part of Quebec that was destroyed—the narrow streets between the river and the rock, where was found most that was foul and disreputable. Much else went also—churches, wharves, ship-yards, and a hospital full of sick persons, many of whom perished in the flames: and the immediate distress amidst the enormous destruction of property, and crowding of houseless thousands, was very terrible; and, when the fire of June drove them forth a second time, almost overwhelming. But the Quebec of a century hence will be all the better for the accident. Generous help was sent from far and near, and the citizens have probably already learned to look back without much regret to the Great Fires of 1845.

At St. John's.
Annual Register, 1846. Chron. 85.

There seems to have been a fatality about fires during this period. Just a year after the second Quebec fire, the city of St. John's, Newfoundland, was almost destroyed. Scarcely a fourth part remained. The houses here were built of wood; and the stores in the warehouses were chiefly oil and blubber, and other combustible substances. A complete sweep seems to have been made of the Churches, and the government and other public offices. During the summer months, the greater part of the inhabitants were living in tents, provided from the army stores.

At Hamburg.
Annual Register, 1842. Chron. 84.

In 1842, there had been such a fire at Hamburg that the people thought the day of Judgment was come. Churches were falling like ricks in the flame. Carts were on fire in the squares, and boats on the river. Terrified horses strove to plunge into the Alster. Amidst blinding showers of ashes, those who were driven beyond their wits sank on their knees, screaming, weeping, and praying; and hardy thieves pillaged the houses that stood open. 2000 houses were destroyed; 30,000 persons were left homeless; and the loss of property was computed at 7,000,000*l.* Liberal aid was sent from this country, as from others.—The greater part of Smyrna was burnt down in July 1845, 4000 houses and many public buildings being destroyed.—In Cuba, the richest part of the rich city of Matanzas perished in like manner: and again, in the same month, July 1845—bringing five of the greatest fires of modern times within the compass of two months—occurred the last fearful New York conflagration, in which 302 dwellings were destroyed, and above 2,000,000*l.* of property. It seems impossible that some lessons should not be derived by the world from such spectacles as these as to the construction of dwellings, if not as to the guardianship of such a power as fire. Meantime, it is as well to admit the purification that it brings, through however hard an experience.

At Smyrna.
Annual Register, 1845. Chron. 97, 98.

At New York.
Annual Register, 1845. Chron. 103.

CHAPTER XIV.

1845.

AT the opening of the session of 1845, there seemed to be but one troublesome controversy agitating the community. The harvest of 1844 had been good; and therefore provisions were moderate in price, trade was brisk, the operative classes were contented, the revenue was steadily rising, and even Ireland was quieter than usual. The one troublesome controversy was—as need hardly be said—about the Corn Laws.

The Corn Question.

The "landed interest" was restless and uneasy. The League was as busy as ever, and visibly growing more powerful in this season of prosperity, though it had been widely said that its influence had been wholly due to the distress of 1840—43. It was also evident, though the truth was admitted with the utmost reluctance, that Sir R. Peel was rising yearly in the favour of the manufacturing and commercial classes, by whom he was regarded as so decided a free-trader, that everything might be hoped from him, as time opened to him opportunities for carrying out his principles, in regard to other food than meat and fish, and garden vegetables. Few, perhaps, put this anticipation into words; but there were many land-owners and many farmers who let it lie in their minds to be revolved in solitary rides and walks, and compared with what they heard among their neighbours: and there were a multitude of commercial men who, practised in discerning the course of commercial events, and of politics in connexion with them, foresaw that the first pressure upon the food-market must occasion a repeal of the corn laws, and that Sir R. Peel was more likely to effect the change than any other man, because he knew and had done most about free trade, and because he was the only man we had who could govern under difficulties. The Whigs were pledged to a fixed duty, which the free-traders were resolved not to accept. Sir R. Peel and his government were pledged to nothing but to do what events might require. They had stood by their Sliding Scale for two years, because, as they declared, they saw no reason for repealing it till it had had a full trial: but they had not said that it would prove equal to any trial: much less had they refused to withdraw it if it should be found to fail. It is a proof of the power of educational and class prejudice that they and the Whigs could so long cling to the proved mischief of agricultural protection: but the minds of the Peel Ministry were now avowedly open to evidence as to whether all agricultural protection was more of an evil than a good, and whether, if an evil, it was a removable one. On this ground alone, the Ministry was regarded as in any way unstable, at the commencement of the session of 1845. On this, the manufacturing and commercial classes were watchful, while the agricultural interest was suspicious. About every thing else, every body was better satisfied than usual, except the late Whig Ministers, and some of their adherents.

1845.

Hansard, lxxvii. 1.

It must now be decided whether the Income Tax should be removed or continued. The Royal Speech, on the 4th of February, showed that the government desired its continuance. Other objects indicated in the Speech were the establishment of the new Irish colleges, and a sanitary system, in pursuance of the Report of the Sanitary Commission, which had just published the results of its inquiries. The proposals about the Irish colleges deprived the Ministers of the companionship of Mr. Gladstone, who conceived himself to be deprived of liberty to proceed by certain opinions which he had published before he came into office, concerning the relations between a Christian Church and State. Mr. Gladstone carefully explained that he had no thought of casting censure on his colleagues, or of deciding what ought to be done under the peculiar circumstances of any society. He acted with a view to the preservation of his own consistency, after having addressed the world in a published treatise. This explanation extinguished the reports which were prevalent of critical and dangerous measures to be proposed by the Ministry which had so alarmed Mr. Gladstone as to cause his retirement. Every body was sorry to lose him; and the general impression seemed to be that he was more scrupulous than was necessary. But recent experience of Whig tenacity of office had disposed men to value even an undue delicacy.

Mr. Gladstone's Retirement.

Hansard, lxxvii. 78.

Financial Statement.

Hansard, lxxvii. 455–497.

According to Sir R. Peel's new and advantageous plan of bringing forward the financial statement at the earliest possible time, the discussion on the Income Tax was entered upon on the 14th of February. Much had been expected from the Premier on the occasion; but his speech surpassed anticipation; being indeed one of the finest of his many fine financial expositions. He was in excellent spirits; and with good reason. The improvement in the revenue was such that a surplus of £5,000,000 at the least would be found in the Exchequer in the next April. But our rapidly extending commerce required increased naval guardianship; and he intended to propose an increased naval expenditure of £1,000,000. There were to be new naval stations in the Chinese seas, in the Pacific, and on the coast of Africa. If the Income tax were abolished, there might be no deficiency the next year; but there would the year after. To the Minister it appeared wiser to continue the Income Tax, and use the opportunity of the surplus to reduce more Customs duties.—First, he took the Sugar duties. He proposed to reduce the duty on unrefined sugar from the West Indies and the Mauritius from 25*s*. 3*d*. to 14*s*., and that on East India to 18*s*. 8*d*., in order to preserve the existing proportions. The protective duty on foreign free-labour sugar was to be reduced to 9*s*. 4*d*., so that duty on such foreign sugar would now be 23*s*. 2*d*. The partially-refined sugars of British production were reduced from 25*s*. 3*d*. to 16*s*. 4*d*.; that from India to 21*s*. 9*d*.; and that on free-labour foreign to 28*s*. Thus, while the protecting duty on unrefined sugar was lowered to 9*s*. 4*d*., that on partially-refined was increased by 11*s*. 4*d*. The prohibitory duty on refined sugar was exchanged, as regarded British produce, for one of 18*s*. 8*d*. on refined, and 21*s*. on double-refined sugar. It was expected that these changes would reduce the price of sugar to the consumer at least 1¼*d*. per pound; more probably 1½*d*. The loss to the revenue in the first year was calculated at £1,300,000.—Next, all the export duties which remained on the list were to be abolished. Among these, was that on coal; and the Minister declared

Sugar Duties.

Export Duties abolished.

1845.

his expectation that the coal-owners would give to the consumer the benefit of the release; and that no more would be heard of combinations to restrict the supply of coal, and to enhance its price. The loss from the abolition of the coal duty was estimated at £120,000.—Next, it was proposed to abolish the duties on 430 out of 813 articles of raw material of manufactures;—a change which would extinguish the troublesome and burdensome warehousing system. This would release the raw material of silk, hemp, and flax; certain yarns; furniture woods; animal and vegetable manures; and a great number of ores, drugs, and dye-stuffs. Staves for coopers' work were another exempted article, on which alone the loss to the Treasury would be £30,000. The loss on the 430 articles was estimated at £320,000; a sum well worth supplying in another way, in consideration of such a disburdening of manufactures as was proposed. A more important article of raw material than any of these was cotton-wool. Though it yielded a revenue more than double the whole 430—viz., £680,000—the Minister proposed to sweep away the duty altogether. So much for the Customs duties. As for the Excise, the Auction duty was to be abolished, and some alteration to be made in auctioneers' licenses. The Glass duty had amounted to 200 and even 300 per cent. on its manufacture. It was now to be remitted. The exciseman was now no longer to intrude his mischievous and vexatious presence in glass-houses: and the people might enjoy the envied privilege of some other countries in having various articles of domestic convenience made of the cleanly and beautiful material of glass. But there would be something better than the comfort of having milk-pans, handles of doors and drawers, lamps, and candlesticks, &c. of glass; something better than rivalling the splendid Bohemian glass to be found in our drawing-rooms; something better than the spread of plate-glass windows:—Sir R. Peel explained to the House that the balance spring of a chronometer he held in his hand, made of glass, was more to be relied on amidst extreme changes of temperature than one of metal: and thus the purposes of science would be promoted; as they must be by the removal of every impediment in the way of the improvement of lenses and the perfecting of light-houses, and of optical instruments of every kind. In the opinion of the Sanitary Commissioners, and of all who knew most of the state of Ireland, the removal of the glass duty was likely to prove of more advantage to the health and comfort of the poor than even the repeal of the window duty. This important article, charged with duty two or three times exceeding its natural cost, had yielded £642,000;—a sum little worth the social mischief of the tax.—The total loss by these reductions would be about £3,338,000;—nearly amounting to the estimated surplus of April twelvemonths—supposing the naval expenditure to be increased as proposed. This was without reckoning the decrease in the public establishments which would follow upon so vast a reduction of taxation. The experiment would be called a bold one; and so it was: but the results of the former great experiment of the same kind were very encouraging. The Income tax had not caused any visible reduction in other branches of revenue; while the losses in the Customs branch were in course of being rapidly filled up. The term for which the continuance of the Income tax was proposed was, again, three years. As no one could foresee the approaching potato-rot,

Duties on Raw Materials.

Excise Duties.

1845. there was every reason to anticipate that, in April 1848, the tax might be removed; and this was the hope held out by the Minister.

The most obvious thing about this scheme was that there was no popularity-seeking in it. There had been no agitation against the taxes now repealed, while there could be no doubt of the delight of the nation if the Income tax had been abolished. With such a surplus, a less far-sighted Minister would have abolished it. Sir R. Peel, instead of giving this immediate delight, preferred using the opportunity of prosperity to strengthen and deepen the foundations of our industrial and commercial welfare. The obvious greatness of this policy secured respect for his scheme, even from those who most opposed particular portions of it.

When the discussion came on, on the 17th, it appeared that many members entertained objections to one or another portion of the scheme; but the continuance of the Income tax was—to the great satisfaction of the country at large, who by this time understood their own interest in its continuance till free trade should be fully obtained—voted by a majority of 208 in a House of 318.—The strongest opposition, because the best grounded in principle, was against the sugar duties, Mr. Milner Gibson moving a resolution against differential duties. But Ministers were too strong to be effectually opposed on any part of their measure; and their Bills became law on the 8th of May.

Hansard, lxxvii. 634.

Hansard, lxxx. 277.

AGRICULTURAL INTERESTS.

At the close of the session it appeared to observers as if scarcely any thing but the Corn laws had been talked of, when once the business of the budget had been settled. Whatever subject was introduced, that of the Corn laws presently appeared and swallowed it up. The farmers' friends were complaining that wheat was at 45*s.* in spite of the new Sliding Scale; and the farmer's other kind of friends, the free-traders, were complaining on his behalf that he could not make his land answer, on account of legal restriction under the name of protection. The new manure, called Guano, was brought at vast expense, from a distance of almost half the world, when the farmer might obtain a far better manure, and more of it, on his land, if he might only import provender for a sufficient proportion of stock. The land was not half cultivated; and the peasantry were consequently insufficiently employed, and the labouring classes insufficiently fed. Other speakers had compassion for the landlords; and others again for the labourers. From whatever point the question was looked at, it was clear that all the three classes who, however opposed in reality, were included together under the designation of "the agricultural interest," were in a low and discontented state—and while it was so, the question of the Corn laws must of necessity be always coming uppermost. Mr. Cobden moved for a Committee of Inquiry into the existing agricultural distress and its causes, and got out what he wanted to say before he was defeated by a majority of 92 in a House of 334. The answer of the government, by the mouth of Mr. Sidney Herbert, was that such Committees were never of any use—that knowledge enough had been obtained already—and that the sensitive agricultural interest would be alarmed, and suppose that government contemplated the withdrawal of their protection. Whatever he said in evidence of the improving condition of agriculture was overthrown by the counter statements of Conservatives, as well as Free-traders, who brought proof, from the votes of agricultural bodies in various parts of England, that the distress was not light

Hansard, lxxviii. 881.

1845.

Portents.

and partial, but general and very severe. There were a few unguarded words, however, in Mr. Herbert's speech which did more good to the free trade cause than all the feeble things he said—not in favour of the principle of protection, for he said nothing of the sort—but against immediate change. Mr. Sidney Herbert was a young man, and ardent, as young men in or out of the government usually are, in political discussion. His ardour found little scope in a negative and halting speech like that which he had to make in reply to Mr. Cobden; and it broke out in a sentence, one of whose phrases was never again dropped while the controversy lasted: "He must add further, as the representative of an agricultural constituency, that it would be distasteful to the agriculturists to come whining to Parliament at every period of temporary distress; nor would they do so. Parliament have accorded to the agriculturists a certain amount of reduced protection. With that they are content; and in adverse circumstances, such as failure of crop and the like, they would meet them manfully, and put their shoulders to the wheel . . . . He was of opinion that they could not do better than to follow the excellent advice . . . . to expend capital on their farms and in improvements of the land, and so by their own efforts restore prosperity. The government had no wish to maintain a high monopoly without alteration, as it had proved; nor had it made any promises to the agriculturists of certain prices in corn, which they knew that no law could give."—Such language as this from a representative of an agricultural constituency, was received with dismay by the farmers all over England. They complained of the mockery of exhorting them to put capital into their land when their capital was all gone; they were shocked at the avowal that prices could not be regulated by law; they were assured at last, in the roughest way, that they were to have no more aid from the government; but the insufferable insult was the phrase about coming "whining" for protection. The free-traders thanked the young statesman for that word: and they made good use of it as long as it was wanted. From that night too they looked upon him, and therefore upon his colleagues, as their own. Whatever Mr. Herbert and his colleagues might themselves think of their position and prospects, it was clear to the free-traders every where that they wanted only a little more enlightenment—a little further disentanglement from the prejudices of a life—to join heartily in sweeping away the mischief of protection to agriculture. There was now no difference of principle between the ministry and the free-traders. It had become a mere question of prudence. In a narrow sense it was called a question of good faith: but those who most strongly insisted that all actual pledges must be kept, perceived that the time must be near when conviction of the truth on the part of the farmers themselves must bring on an absolution on every hand.

Hansard, lxxviii. 818.

A few nights after the vote on Mr. Cobden's motion, the cause of the free-traders was well pleaded by an antagonist. Mr. Miles moved that the surplus revenue of the time should be applied to the relief of the agricultural interest; and he made bitter complaints of the last Sliding Scale, as wholly ineffectual for the relief of the farmers. His speech was one long complaint of the plenty that overspread the land—the abundance of corn and the cheapness of meat. He laid himself open to the admonitory reply that it was impossible to set about making food scarce and dear: and that the proper course evidently

Hansard, lxxviii. 963.

1845. was for the farmers to study how to produce the requisite abundance at home by improved cultivation, without which it must assuredly be obtained from abroad. As Sir James Graham observed (premising that he considered protection to agriculture just and necessary) Mr. Miles's statements required rather a repeal of the Corn laws and of what remained of the tariff than so small a measure as he proposed: but Sir James Graham did not admit the facts with regard to the severity and prevalence of agricultural distress. Before the debate closed, some words were uttered by an enemy of the government which, read after the event, prove what expectations were abroad. The rancour and levity of Mr. D'israeli's speeches prevent their being relied on for accuracy of statement: but, like all other speeches, they make unconscious revelations of fact which are valuable in the retrospect. On this occasion, while the tone of insult goes for nothing, the prophecy is a fact of some weight. After saying that Sir R. Peel "sends down his valet, who says in the genteelest manner, 'We can have no whining here,'" Mr. D'israeli proceeded, "Protection appears to be in about the same condition that Protestantism was in 1828. The country will draw its moral. For my part, if we are to have free trade, I, who honour genius, prefer that such measures should be proposed by the hon. member for Stockport (Mr. Cobden) than by one who, through skilful parliamentary manœuvres, has tampered with the generous confidence of a great people and of a great party. For myself, I care not what may be the result. Dissolve, if you please, the parliament you have betrayed, and appeal to the people who, I believe, mistrust you. For me there remains this at least —the opportunity of expressing thus publicly my belief that a Conservative government is an organized hypocrisy."

Hansard, lxxviii. 985.

Hansard, lxxviii. 1028.

Mr. Miles's motion being negatived, two more debates on the great subject remained. On the 3rd of June, Mr. Ward moved for a Committee of Inquiry on the burdens and exemptions of the landed interest: and on the 10th, Mr. Villiers brought forward his annual motion on the Corn laws. On Mr. Ward's motion, the protectionists' majority was 182 to 109; and on Mr. Villiers's, 254 to 122. These debates showed a marked advance in the question. Sir James Graham repeated with increased emphasis his conviction that the prosperity of the landed interest was dependent on that of other classes; and that a gradual repeal of protection would prove to be necessary for agriculture, as for every other interest. He only protested against suddenness. Another significant fact was that Lord J. Russell, in bringing forward a set of Resolutions on the condition of the labouring classes, declared that he could not now recommend the fixed duty of 8*s.* which he had proposed in 1841. He supposed no one would propose a smaller duty than 4*s.*: and he, if it was his affair, should propose one of 4*s.*, 5*s.*, or 6*s.* The cause was now felt to be won. It was universally understood that Lord J. Russell never went before public opinion, and that he rarely if ever knew the extent and bearing of public opinion. If he, then, admitted that four years had authorized him to reduce his fixed duty one half (for he invited pressure to make it 4*s.*) it became almost a calculable matter how soon the Whig leader would admit that the other half of his fixed duty was indefensible. And the amusing looseness of his terms of proposal—the offered choice of four, five, or six shillings—gave the strongest impression of a temporary playing with the

Hansard, lxxx. 1423.

Hansard, lxxxi. 350.

Hansard, lxxx. 879.

1845.

subject, in preparation for working it seriously. From this night, it was taken for granted every where that the Whig leaders were in competition with the existing Ministry for the repeal of the Corn laws: and even the question of time was brought within a narrow compass.

The Royal Speech on the prorogation of Parliament, on the 9th of August, was the last thoroughly cheerful Speech which the nation was to enjoy for some time. In the account given to her Majesty, through the Speaker, of the work of the session, we find that, besides the business already noted—Irish Education, British Railways, and fiscal improvements—the parliament had amended the law of Scotland in regard to the relief of the poor, promoted the Drainage of Land, and Enclosure of Commons, and extended the provisions of the Bank Act of last year, with some modifications, to the Banks of Scotland and Ireland. The prevailing impression of those who watched the course of parliamentary affairs was, that the disintegration of parties was proceeding more and more rapidly; as the commercial element rose above the agricultural; and that from this change there could be no rest or pause till the agricultural interest had obtained that freedom, and consequent stimulus and intelligence, which had caused the expansion of interests that were erroneously considered to be antagonistic.

Bad Weather.

Potato Rot.

Meantime, it had begun to rain. It began to rain, after a cold and late spring, at the beginning of the summer; and it seemed as if it was never going to leave off again. In some parts of the country, the sun was scarcely seen from the month of May till the next spring. Those who first marked the perseverance of the soft-falling rain thought of the budding and blossoming promised in Scripture, where the snow and rain are shown forth as illustrations of the fertilizing influences of Providence; and thus far, there was nothing but hope of good. Then, as the fall went on, with less softness, and more chill, and fewer intermissions, men began to fear for the harvest, and to calculate that much dry foreign wheat would be necessary to mix with our own damp and unripened grain. Then arose the fear that our own inferior grain would not keep,—so thoroughly ready for sprouting would some of it appear to be; and, in the midst of this, it became clear that throughout Europe, with a few local exceptions, the harvest would prove a deficient one; so that, unless there was unusual abundance in America, the prospect was a fearful one. Still, the most sagacious and the most timid were far from conceiving what the rain was doing by its persevering continual soaking into the ground. First, a market-gardener here and there, a farmer, an Irish cottier, saw a brown spot appear on the margin of the leaf of the potato, and did not remember ever to have seen such a thing before. The brown spot grew black and spread, and covered the stalk, till a whole potato field looked as if a scorching wind had passed over it. Yet, perhaps, the roots might appear to be in a good state; and one man would let the plants alone, while another would mow off the tops, and wait to see what happened. The stealthy rain had, by some means yet as mysterious as ever, generated some minute plague—of what nature nobody yet knows, if indeed it is certain that the rain was the instrument;—a plague so minute that no microscope has yet convicted it, yet so powerful that it was soon to overthrow governments, and derange commerce, and affect for all time to come the

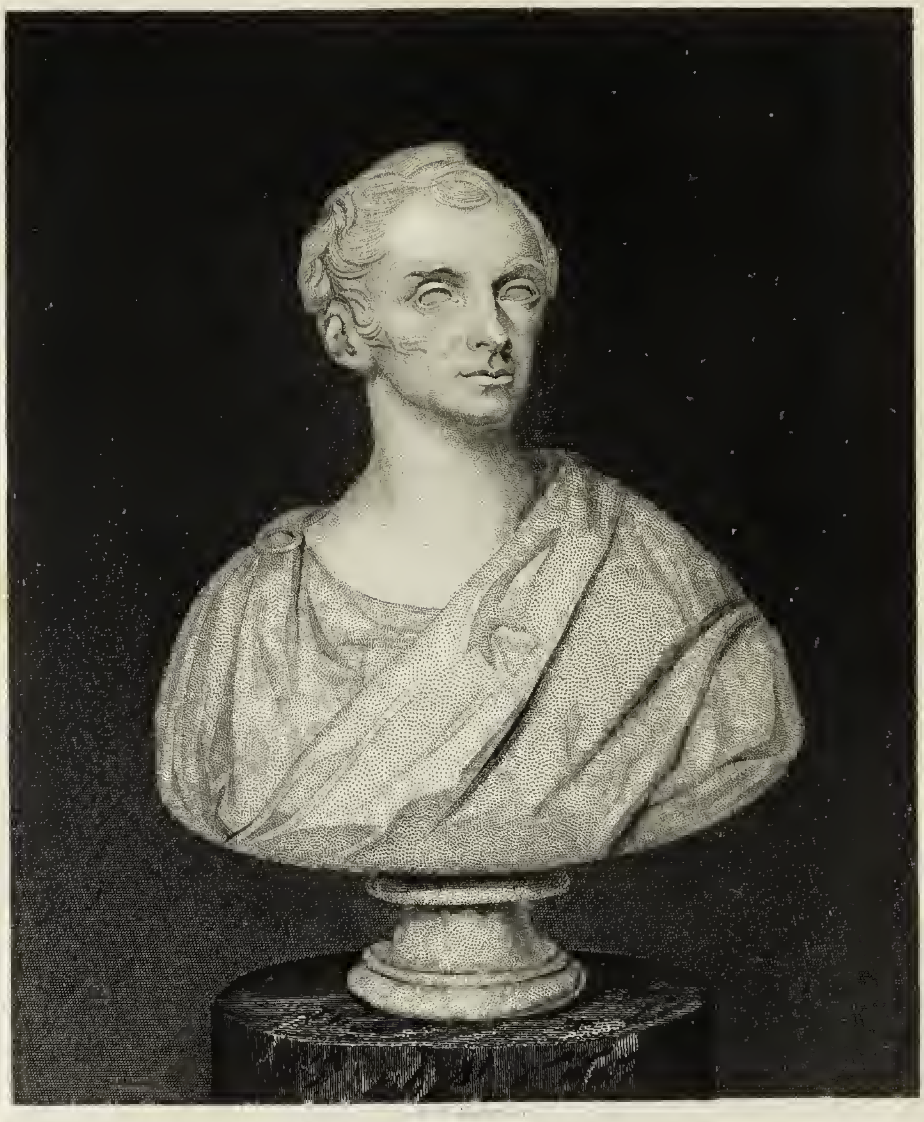
1845. political fate of England, and settle the question of the regeneration or the destruction of Ireland. The minute plague spread and spread, till it blackened thousands of acres, and destroyed the food of millions of men. In some wholesome regions, the last to be affected, the inhabitants would hardly believe what they heard and read. The newspapers were exaggerating shamefully for some political object; the League was trading on the rain, and frightening the public: private correspondents were credulous, and too fond of excitement: their own potatoes, and most of their neighbours', looked very well: and the clergy were again ready with rebuke of anxiety and doubt, saying that there had always been talk of bad weather, but that, somehow or other, there was always a harvest. When, in such a favoured region, two or three benevolent gentry stored up their own sound potatoes for the use of the sick and the aged in case of need, and laid in rice and macaroni and other substitutes for winter use at their own tables, their neighbours for a time laughed at the precaution, and said that potatoes were abundant and excessively cheap in the markets. But soon the change appeared even in these healthiest districts. A man might exhibit his green and flourishing crop to a stranger, and say that he should take it up on Monday: on that night would come a thunder-storm; and the next morning, if the owner stirred the soil of his blackened field with a pitchfork, up came such a steaming stench as showed him that his field was turned putrid. And then it became known why potatoes were abundant and cheap in the markets. Every body was eager to sell before his potatoes had time to rot. What was to become of the poor Irish if this went on, was now the most anxious question of the time.

The League.

As for the League, it was busy enough during the rain; but not more than it had been before. The Agricultural Protection Society, which had risen up in opposition to it, declared in the preceding December, that the League had ceased its missionary efforts, and become a mere registration club, while it had itself circulated 30,000 copies of an address in favour of protection. The League registration went on quite as diligently as was alleged; but in another month—January, 1845—it appeared that 150 meetings in parliamentary boroughs, and fifty elsewhere, had been held in little more than two years; that 15,000 copies of the 'League' newspaper were weekly distributed; and that 2,000,000 copies of other publications had been sent abroad. Of letters, 30,000 had been received during the year, and 300,000 sent out. The next May showed that the League was something more than a registration club. Covent Garden Theatre was fitted up with great skill and taste for a Bazaar; and the show was something quite unlike any thing ever seen before in our country. In the great Gothic Hall into which the theatre was transformed, there was a display of manufactures—freely presented in aid of the League Fund—which sold for £25,000, besides leaving a sufficient quantity to make another large bazaar at Manchester. It was open from the 5th to the 29th of May; and 125,000 persons paid for admission within that time. Four hundred ladies conducted the sales; and, generally speaking, each contributing town had a stall, with its name, and sometimes its civic arms, painted above. The porcelain and cutlery exhibitions, the mirrors and grindstones, the dolls and the wheat sacks, shoes and statuettes, antiquities and the last fashion of coloured muslins, flannels and plated goods, and anatomical

Companion to the Almanac, 1846, p. 254.

Annual Register, 1845: Chron. 67.



LORD JOHN RUSSELL.

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preparations, laces and books, made a curious and wonderful display, which was thought to produce more effect on some parliamentary minds than all the eloquence yet uttered in the Commons. Yet, after all this, the League had greater things to do. We find it decreeing the levy of £250,000 for the promotion of free trade; and, in December, there was a meeting at Manchester, at which one member subscribed £1500; twenty-two subscribed £1000 each; one £700; and eighteen £500. The enthusiasm had risen as the crisis drew on; and the sum of £62,000 was presently obtained within the room, while the zeal elsewhere was such that there was no doubt of the realization of the whole quarter of a million, if it should be wanted. And all this was after £122,508 had been raised by previous subscriptions.

Annual Register, 1845. Chron. 193.

MORE PORTENTS.

By this time, however, there were many who doubted whether either money or effort would be required much longer. The rain having gone on, people began inquiring in September whether the ports were to be opened; and next, whether we could be sure of supplies, at short notice and in a prevalent bad season, if the ports were opened to-morrow. Then some people who had before talked without thinking began to see how dangerous such precariousness was, and how much more secure against famine we should be if foreign countries should raise corn for us every year, instead of being called upon to supply us out of their own stock, or from an accidental surplus. On the 10th of October, Lord Ashley addressed a letter to the electors of Dorsetshire, which was eagerly read all over the kingdom. He declared his conviction that the destiny of the Corn laws was fixed, and that "the leading men of the great parties in the legislature are by no means disinclined to their eventual abolition." In the beginning of November, Cabinet Councils were frequent; and rumours were abroad that extensive inquiries had been for some time making by the Minister about the results of the harvest. Rumour spoke also of disagreements in the Cabinet; but these were supposed to relate merely to the question of opening the ports.—At this time, Lord Morpeth, a late Whig Minister, joined the League, and sent a letter with his contribution, in which he declared, "I wish to record in the most emphatic way I can my conviction that the time is come for a total repeal of the corn laws, and my protest against the continued inaction of the State in the present emergency." Lord Morpeth declared that he wrote this letter "without concert or consultation with any one else:" and events proved that he wrote it without any more insight than people in general had into what "the State"—that is, the Cabinet—was about.—Lord John Russell presently showed himself determined not to share the "inaction of the State." He addressed to the electors of London a letter from Edinburgh, dated November 22nd, 1845, which he declared to be occasioned by the separating of the Ministers without apparent result, after their frequent Cabinet meetings. After confessing his changes of opinion during the last twenty years, and relating the stages of his advocacy of a continually lessening amount of fixed duty, Lord J. Russell declared, "It is no longer worth while to contend for a fixed duty. . . . . The struggle to make bread scarce and dear, when it is clear that part, at least, of the additional price goes to increase rent, is a struggle deeply injurious to an aristocracy which (this quarrel once removed) is strong in property, strong in the construction of our legislature, strong in opinion, strong in ancient associations and the memory

Spectator, 1845, p. 1132.

LORD JOHN RUSSELL'S LETTER.

Spectator, 1845, p. 1134.

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of immortal services.—Let us then unite to put an end to a system which has proved to be the blight of commerce, the bane of agriculture, the source of bitter divisions among classes, the cause of penury, fever, mortality, and crime, among the people."—This invitation was valuable as a preparation for the deed to be done by other hands. But it was too late as regarded Lord J. Russell himself. It met with no hearty response. His position would now have been a glorious one if he had ever before advocated perfect freedom of the corn trade; and he would have been trusted if he had been a Conservative leader, like his rival;—a Conservative leader convinced and converted by the stringency of circumstances: but, as an avowed leader of a liberal party, converted only at the moment when he should have been attaining the aim of many years—at the moment when his Conservative rival was undergoing the agony of conversion—he was not trusted; and it was impossible that he should be. This letter, on which he clearly founded great hopes, did him no good; the Conservative convert was appointed to the work. When the time came for explanations in parliament, Lord J. Russell made complaints of his Letter being regarded as a party move—as a bid for office; but there was one feature in the Letter which deprived him of all right to resent such an interpretation—it abounded in taunts and expressions of spleen towards Sir R. Peel. The whole composition has the air of being aimed at the Minister.

Cabinet Councils. Hansard, lxxxiii. 86.

It is known by means of Ministerial explanations afterwards, what took place during this period when all the world was on the watch, and no one could learn any thing. The Cabinet Councils held between the 1st and the 6th of November were for the purpose of considering the information sent in from Ireland about the potato crop, and from the whole kingdom about the general crop. As regarded Ireland, the reports were alarming beyond description. The Ministers could deliberate upon them without disturbance from without; for as yet there was no agitation about opening the ports which could affect the action of the government;—no petitions, no urgency from public meetings or in the newspapers. The desire of Sir R. Peel at that time was to throw open the ports by an Order in Council, or by calling parliament together immediately for the purpose: but only three of his colleagues agreed with him; and the Ministers separated, on the understanding that they should reassemble at the call of the Premier. His hope was that the growing alarm would presently convince all his colleagues of the necessity of opening the ports. Commissions were organized for the prevention of a sudden pressure of extreme distress, especially in Ireland: and on the 25th of November, the Ministers again met, to prepare instructions for these Commissions. The instructions were agreed on: but then it appeared to the Premier that these instructions were inconsistent with the maintenance of the Corn laws in their existing state. He reserved to himself the power of ensuring a free supply from abroad; and now his colleagues had become so impressed by the daily increasing alarm as to afford a hope that they would withdraw the opposition with which they before met the proposal. But Lord Stanley could not yield; nor could one or two others. If the opening of the ports had taken place at the beginning of November, it would have been done with a strong hand: but the delay had admitted of the appearance of Lord J. Russell's Letter; and

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now, if the Cabinet was not absolutely united—if a single resignation took place—it would appear as if the Letter of a rival had determined the Minister's views, and his acts would have lost all their moral weight.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE 'TIMES.'

It was in the midst of the second series of consultations that an incident occurred which startled the whole kingdom, and gave the newspapers plenty to say. On the 4th of December, the '*Times*' announced that it was the intention of government to repeal the Corn laws, and to call parliament together in January for the purpose. Some ministerial papers doubted and then indignantly denied this. Some journals said that it could not be known to the '*Times*,' because the fact could transpire only through the breach of the Cabinet oath. Others said that it might fairly be a matter of inference from the general policy being understood: but to this there was the objection that the '*Times*' asserted that its news was not a matter of inference, but of fact; and the ordinary government papers persevered in denying the truth of the news altogether. The '*Times*' was scolded, insulted, jeered at, lectured; and every body was warned not to mind the '*Times*:' but every body did mind it; and the '*Times*' persevered, day after day, week after week, in haughtily asserting that its intelligence would be found correct within an assigned period. Meantime, the general conviction was complete that the '*Times*' had some peculiar means of information. One report was that the Duke of Wellington had come down to the Horse Guards in great wrath, swearing as he threw himself from his horse, at the pass things had come to when the Corn laws were to be given up: but, besides that such a freak was not very like the shrewd and loyal Duke of Wellington, there was no reason here why the '*Times*' should be exclusively in possession of the information. There are some, of course, who know, and many more who believe they know, how the thing happened: but it is not fitting to record in a permanent form the chit-chat of London about any but the historical bearings of an incident like this. The '*Times*' had true information: and that is all that is important to the narrative. As we have said, the announcement was made on the 4th of December. On the 5th, the '*Standard*' exhibited a conspicuous title to a counter-statement: "Atrocious fabrication by the '*Times*:'" but meanwhile, "the effect of the announcement by the '*Times*' at the Corn Exchange was immense surprise, not so much displeasure as might have been expected, and an instant downward tendency in the price of grain." So said other papers. "We adhere to our original announcement," said the '*Times*' of December 6th, "that parliament will meet early in January, and that a repeal of the Corn laws will be proposed in one House by Sir R. Peel, and in the other by the Duke of Wellington." The free-traders so far gave weight to the assertion as to announce every where with diligence that they would accept of "nothing short of total repeal: not a shilling, nor a farthing, of duty should be imposed without sound reason shown."

For a few days after this, the League was at the height of its glory. The agriculturists were cowed, and could only groan and murmur: men were out all day in the streets, to learn the opinions of their neighbours, and above all, the expectations of Leaguers. On Sunday the 7th, it was understood that the Duke of Wellington had certainly, though most reluctantly, yielded. On Monday, it was observed that he did not attend the Council: on Tuesday, it

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Resignation of Ministers.

It may truly be said that the intelligence was received throughout the country with dismay. The full value of Sir R. Peel was not yet known—the value of his moral earnestness when at last freed from the shackles of educational prejudice and party intimacies—but the value of his administration was every where felt. For above four years now the nation had reposed upon his wise government—reposed on his safe and skilful financial management. and thorough efficiency in all the business of governing: and he and his colleagues had moreover carried us through a period of deep depression and fearful disorder; replenished the sources of our manufactures and commerce; reinstated our finances; given benefits to Ireland; sanctioned the principle and practice of religious liberty; and strengthened and settled the whole fabric of our polity, as far as the vigorous and skilful administration of the national affairs for nearly five years could do so. And now, just when the most important of all existing questions had to be conducted to an issue, he was to step aside for those who had no more right than he, on any ground, to the management of the business, and far less power of every kind. The regret was but temporary, however, for the Peel Ministry was presently restored.

Hansard, lxxxiii. 89.

Sir R. Peel thought it due to the magnitude of the interest at stake to try no experiment which might fail. When assured, therefore, of the dissent of his colleagues, he immediately resigned. Lord Stanley and the other dissentients would not undertake to form a government: and the Queen, of her own choice, sent for Lord J. Russell. Lord J. Russell was at Edinburgh. The royal summons reached him at night on the 8th of December. As there was then no railway to London, it was the 10th before he arrived in town; and the 11th before he appeared in the Queen's presence at Osborne, in the Isle of Wight. He had made up his mind that, if asked to undertake the formation of a Ministry, be must decline, because his party were in a minority in the Commons of from 90 to 100. This was his answer when the Queen made the expected request: but Sir R. Peel had left with the Queen a paper in which, after declaring the reasons of his resignation, he avowed his readiness "in his private capacity, to aid and give every support to the new Minister whom her Majesty might select to effect a settlement of the question of the Corn laws." This wholly changed the state and prospect of the case. Lord J. Russell returned to London to consult such of his friends as were within reach. Through Sir J. Graham, Lord J. Russell was put in possession of all the information on which the late Ministers had proceeded; but not of the details of their proposed measures. It was no time for a general election. None but a rash Minister would dream of requiring it while the country was in strong excitement, and under the visible doom of a great calamity. Instead of this, the thing to be done was to frame such a measure of Corn law repeal as would secure the support of Sir R. Peel and the

Negotiation with Lord John Russell.

Hansard, lxxxiii. 98.

colleagues who had adhered to him. After a good deal of correspondence, through the Queen, of difficult transaction by statesmen so delicately placed with regard to each other, Lord J. Russell conceived himself justified in attempting to form an administration; and he communicated with the sovereign to that effect on the 18th of December. But, next morning, an insuperable difficulty arose. One of the friends on whom he had confidently reckoned as a coadjutor declined to enter the Cabinet. This was Lord Grey. Highly as Lord J. Russell valued him, he would at any other time have endeavoured to form a Cabinet without him, at his own desire: but the position of the Whigs was now too critical—or, at least, their leader thought so—to admit the risk of such speculation as would be excited by the exclusion of Lord Grey. On the 20th, therefore, the Queen was finally informed that Lord John Russell found it impossible to form an administration.

Hansard, lxxxiii. 101—3.

Hansard, lxxxiii. 106.

LORD GREY.

Among the newspaper reports of the public talk during this interval, we find a few words in italics about the popular surprise at there being "no mention of Lord Grey" in the list of Whig conferences; and close beside this, we meet with notice of the "alarm" excited by the consideration that Lord Palmerston must have some office, and most probably the Foreign Department. Our foreign relations were now in a critical state, as our history of the French and American questions will have shown: and there were many who stood in fear of Lord Palmerston's "talent of keeping perpetually open all vital questions and dangerous controversies." It was well understood that Lord Grey thought it unsafe to make Lord Palmerston Foreign Minister at such a juncture; and that he declined to act inconsistently with his own long-avowed principles of peace by sitting in the Cabinet with a Minister who had done more than any other man to foster the war-spirit in 1840 and 1841. The disappointed Whig party bitterly complained that "Lord Grey had done it all:" but with the country at large Lord Grey lost nothing by this difficult act of self-exclusion, or by his honourable silence in the midst of the censure which was abundantly poured out upon him.

Spectator, 1845, p. 1186.

On Friday the 19th, the Queen intimated to Sir R. Peel that, as their political relation was about to terminate, she wished to see him the next day, to bid him farewell. Before he went to Windsor on the Saturday, he was informed by Lord John Russell of the failure of his enterprise: and when he entered the Queen's presence, he was told that, so far from taking leave, he must prepare for the resumption of office. He returned to town as Minister of the Crown, and found no difficulty in reconstructing his Cabinet. Lord Stanley of course retired. All the others remained—all but one who had died suddenly from the anxiety of the crisis. Lord Wharncliffe had been suffering from gout; but no danger was apprehended. He was, however, in no state to bear the turmoil of the time; and he suddenly sank on the 19th of December, in the 70th year of his age. As President of the Council, he had proved himself a zealous and effective Minister; and his earnestness in fulfilling to the utmost such provisions for education as had been obtained secured him much gratitude from society. It was an untoward time for a West Riding election: but this elevation of Mr. Stuart Wortley to the peerage rendered it necessary; and Lord Morpeth was returned to his old seat without opposition. Mr. Gladstone

Hansard, lxxxiii. 89.

RETURN OF SIR R. PEEL TO POWER.

DEATH OF LORD WHARNCLIFFE. Annual Register, 1845: Chron. 320.

Annual Register, 1846: Chron. 205.

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became Colonial Secretary, instead of Lord Stanley; and the Duke of Buccleuch succeeded Lord Wharncliffe as President of the Council.

Sir R. Peel's position.

And now, once more, all was going well—well for the people; and, in a large view, well for the Minister. His position was at once an humbling and a glorious one; his course a hard and yet a straight one. He had to stand up in the face of the world, and say that he had been in error all his life, and that he found himself compelled now to achieve that which he had all his life opposed. This was the hard part—accompanied as it must be by the rage of disappointed partisans, the indignant grief of old friends, and perhaps the intemperate triumph of old enemies. But his position was a glorious one, if he could but show himself equal to it. If, instead of making this the beginning of a new career, as some anticipated, he settled it with himself that this should be his last scene of power, and he could endure calmly what he must go through as a necessary retribution for previous error, and close his career with giving to the nation the benefit it most wanted in the best possible manner, this last scene of his administration might be the noblest.—His course must be hard; for there were terrible storms ready to burst in parliament; and, when he had, by a stern and self-forgetting rule, held his party together for the passage of the single great measure now in his hand, his party would fall to pieces, and he might be left alone in his place in the legislature, after a life of industry and eminent political prosperity. But not the less was his course clear. He must propose and carry through a total repeal of the Corn laws, whatever became of himself. This must be his single and his final aim; and those who knew anything of the "alacrity of spirit" with which a strong and honourable mind enters on a great work of reparation, self-sacrifice, and general justice, believed that Sir R. Peel would now make manifest to the utmost the nobleness of his position and the singleness of his aim.

The Duke of Wellington's position.

As for the Duke of Wellington, the peremptory and inflexible, who had gone through so many changes, and must now go through one more—every body knew, by dint of repetition, what he would say. He would say that he could not desert his sovereign. And this is what he did say. "At all events," he declared, "whatever that measure may be, I must say this; that, situated as I am in this country—highly rewarded as I have been by the Sovereign and the people of England—I could not refuse that Sovereign to aid her, when called upon, to form a government, in order to enable her Majesty to meet her parliament, and to carry on the business of the country. Upon that ground, my Lords, I present myself to your Lordships."

Hansard, lxxxiii. 170.

CHAPTER XV.

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OPENING OF THE SESSION. Hansard, lxxxiii. 1.

THE Royal Speech, delivered by the Queen in person on the 19th of January, expressed satisfaction in the results of the repeal of Customs duties, as far as they had yet gone, and recommended to parliament the consideration whether the repeal of restrictions might not be carried yet further; whether there might not still be a remission "of the existing duties upon many articles, the produce or manufacture of other countries."

FURTHER REMISSION OF DUTIES.

Hansard, lxxxiii 239—283.

The remission took place on several articles of the tariff without much opposition. Almost the only raw materials still subject to duty were tallow and timber; and these were to be extensively reduced. In consideration of the release of so much raw material, the manufacturers were expected to acquiesce in the reduction of some remaining articles of manufacture; and this they showed all willingness to do. And well they might; for the Minister's exposition proved the vast increase of the silk manufacture in England, in proportion to the removal of duties. There was to be a considerable reduction of the duty on silk manufactures, with more certainty of levy: and the duties on cotton and woollen fabrics were removed or lessened one half.—The differential duties on free-labour sugar were reduced—the higher from 11*s.* 8*d.* to 8*s.*; and the lower from 9*s.* 4*d.* to 5*s.* 10*d.*—On brandy and foreign spirits, the duty was brought down nearer to the point which might obviate smuggling: that is, from 22*s.* 10*d.* per gallon to 15*s.* Animal food and vegetables were to be admitted duty free; and butter, cheese, hops, and cured fish, reduced one half. Live animals were freed from duty; and a considerable number of minor and "unenumerated articles." The Minister was strengthened by the successes of former years; and by the absorbing of men's mind in the corn subject; and these remissions passed without any effectual opposition. The sugar duties, however, were left over for subsequent consideration.

THE REVENUE PROSPEROUS. Hansard, lxxxvi. 1132.

The revenue showed indisputably the results of former remissions. There was this year a clear surplus of £2,380,600. There was a considerable increase in the consumption of those exciseable commodities which are connected with the comfort of the mass of the people; more money was in the Savings' Banks: and there was something better still—a more significant and more blessed token of prosperity than any other—there was a marked decrease of crime. But for the impending famine, there could be no doubt that our country was on the way to a prosperity which must for ever have settled opinions about the policy of free trade.

It was on the 27th of January that the above tariff reductions were proposed, in the same speech that was to announce the ministerial plan about the Corn laws. "Every crevice" into which a stranger could thrust himself was occupied: and hundreds who held tickets were obliged to remain in the streets. Prince Albert and the Duke of Cambridge sat below the bar. The

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Minister's speech lasted four hours. It was listened to for the most part in quietness; but some paragraphs were vehemently cheered by the Opposition.

The Corn Duties Hansard, lxxxiii. 256.

All agricultural produce which serves as cattle-food, such as buckwheat and Indian corn, was to be admitted duty free. It was this provision which wrought better than any other precaution whatever to reduce the pressure of the subsequent famine in Ireland; for Indian meal is a good article of human food—far superior to potatoes. All Colonial grain was to bear a merely nominal duty. This would be good news in our Australian colonies, whenever the tidings could reach so far. As for other grain, all protection was to cease in three years; and that time was allowed for the farmers to accommodate themselves to the change. In the interval, the duties were to be considerably reduced. When wheat was under 48*s.* per quarter, the duty was to be 10*s.* When at a shilling higher, the duty was to be a shilling lower, till wheat should be at 54*s.* and the duty at 4*s.*, after which the duty should not further change. The same principle and proportion were to apply to other kinds of grain. The immediate effect would be to reduce the duty, at the existing price of wheat, from 16*s.* to 4*s.*—It was proposed to afford some important relief to the farmers, otherwise than by laying burdens on other classes. Loans of public money were to be attainable by persons contemplating agricultural improvements. The law of settlement was to be so altered as to prevent country parishes from being burdened with labourers when adversity pressed on the manufacturing districts. Five years' industrial residence was henceforth to constitute a settlement. The cost of prisoners was to be taken off the county rates. By a consolidation of the highway departments—a consolidation which would reduce the Boards from 16,000 to about 600—a vast relief from waste and mismanagement would be obtained. Such were the main features of the scheme. Objections naturally sprang up on all sides. The Protectionists were, of course, furious: and their antagonists were sorry—and especially on account of the farmers themselves—that there was to be an interval of three years before the corn trade was free. The farmers' friends looked on the accompanying provisions of relief as a mere mockery; and some derided the multifarious character of the scheme. But, after all objections were made, there remained the grand and simple fact that in three years the Corn laws would be no more. The manufacturers threw away with joy such remaining duties as had been called a protection to them; and the League leaders, who had invariably declared that they would support any man of any party who would obtain the repeal of the Corn laws, now gave their whole strength to the Minister and his scheme.

Hansard, lxxxiii. 263.

Relief to Farmers.

The Issue.

The debate began on the 9th of February, and extended over twelve nights between that and the 27th, when there was a decision in favour of the government by a majority of 97 in a House of 577. On the 2d of March, the House went into Committee, when four nights more were filled with debate, before the second reading was carried by a majority of 88. A last effort was made, in a debate of three nights, to prevent a third reading; but it was carried, at four in the morning of the 16th of May, by a majority of 98 in a House of 556 members.

Hansard, lxxxiv. 349.

Hansard, lxxxvi. 721.

In the Lords, the majority in favour of the second reading was 47 in a full House—a more easy passage than could have been anticipated. The few

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amendments that were proposed were negatived; the Bill passed on the 22nd of June, and became law on the 26th of the same month.

Hansard, lxxxvii. 1033.

During this long series of debates, every consideration that had ever been urged, for or against a repeal of the Corn laws, was brought up again. There is no need to repeat any of them here. Every personality that could pass the lips of educated men and gentlemen in our period of civilization was uttered by angry antagonists: and not a few which it is surprising that educated men and gentlemen could listen to without discountenance and rebuke. It would do no good to repeat any of them here. The principal new points, not mere personality, were the extraordinary denial, on the part of the Protectionists, of the existence or probability of famine in Ireland, though such an amount of evidence was laid before the House as might have been expected to bear down all party rancour, and all pride of opinion, and to induce sympathy with the administration in the most prejudiced man in the House. On this, also, there is no occasion to enlarge. Time has shown what the condition of Ireland was, and was to be; and the keenest Protectionist is now probably astonished that he could ever doubt it, after listening to the evidence offered by Sir Robert Peel and Lord Lincoln.—On the soundness of that evidence, however, rested so much of the Minister's case that any appreciation of himself and his position was impossible while his detail of facts was denied. His position during the session was therefore hard beyond all parallel. His temper and conduct were worthy of it. He made at first such ample confession of the error of a life; maintained so simply the duty and dignity of avowing error instead of being obstinate and silent; bore so magnanimously the reproaches which were the natural retribution of the mistake which he had held in common with almost the whole of the legislature and the aristocracy during the greater part of his life; and was so sustained under his personal trials by a moral enthusiasm sufficiently rare at all times in the House of Commons, and little expected from him, that before his retirement, he was looked up to with new feelings by generous-minded men of all parties. His own words will best explain his position and his views. "You have a right, I admit," he said, in his final speech on the Bill, "to taunt me with any change of opinion on the Corn laws; but when you say that by my adoption of the principles of free trade, I have acted in contradiction to those principles which I have always avowed during my whole life, that charge, at least, I say, is destitute of foundation. Sir, I will not enter at this late hour into the discussion of any other topic. I foresaw the consequences that have resulted from the measures which I thought it my duty to propose. We were charged with the heavy responsibility of taking security against a great calamity in Ireland. We did not act lightly. We did not form our opinion upon merely local information—the information of local authorities likely to be influenced by an undue alarm. Before I, and those who agreed with me, came to that conclusion, we had adopted every means—by local inquiry, and by sending perfectly disinterested persons of authority to Ireland—to form a just and correct opinion. Whether we were mistaken or not—I believe we were not mistaken—but, even if we were mistaken, a generous construction should be put upon the motives and conduct of those who are charged with the responsibility of protecting millions of subjects of the Queen from the consequences

The Minister.

Hansard, lxxxvi. 705.

1846. of scarcity and famine. Sir, whatever may be the result of these discussions, I feel severely the loss of the confidence of those from almost all of whom I heretofore received a most generous support. So far from expecting them, as some have said, to adopt my opinions, I perfectly recognise the sincerity with which they adhere to their own. I recognise their perfect right, on account of the admitted failure of my speculation, to withdraw from me their confidence. I honour their motives, but I claim, and I always will claim, while entrusted with such powers, and subject to such responsibility as the Minister of this great country is entrusted with and is subject to—I always will assert the right to give that advice which I conscientiously believe to be conducive to the general well-being. I was not considering, according to the language of the honourable Member for Shrewsbury, what was the best bargain to make for a party. I was considering first what were the best measures to avert a great calamity, and, as a secondary consideration, to relieve that interest which I was bound to protect from the odium of refusing to acquiesce in measures which I thought to be necessary for the purpose of averting that calamity. Sir, I cannot charge myself or my colleagues with having been unfaithful to the trust committed to us. . . . If I look to the prerogative of the Crown—if I look to the position of the Church—if I look to the influence of the aristocracy—I cannot charge myself with having taken any course inconsistent with Conservative principles, calculated to endanger the privileges of any branch of the legislature, or of any institutions of the country. My earnest wish has been, during my tenure of power, to impress the people of this country with a belief that the legislature was animated by a sincere desire to frame its legislation upon the principles of equity and justice. I have a strong belief that the greatest object which we or any other government can contemplate should be to elevate the social condition of that class of the people with whom we are brought into no direct relation by the exercise of the elective franchise. I wish to convince them that our object has been so to apportion taxation, that we shall relieve industry and labour from any undue burden, and transfer it, so far as is consistent with the public good, to those who are better enabled to bear it. I look to the present peace of this country; I look to the absence of all disturbance—to the non-existence of any commitment for a seditious offence; I look to the calm that prevails in the public mind; I look to the absence of all disaffection; I look to the increased and growing public confidence on account of the course you have taken in relieving trade from restrictions, and industry from unjust burdens; and where there was dissatisfaction, I see contentment; where there was turbulence, I see there is peace; where there was disloyalty, I see there is loyalty; I see a disposition to confide in you, and not to agitate questions that are at the foundations of your institutions."

In a later speech, the very last which he delivered before quitting office, he again recurred to the great consolatory ground of the improved condition of those who can least help themselves. He relinquished power, to use his own words, "with a more lively recollection of the support and confidence I have received during several years, than of the opposition which, during a recent period, I have encountered. In relinquishing power, I shall leave a name, severely censured, I fear, by many who, on public grounds, deeply regret the severance of party ties—deeply regret that severance, not from interested or

Hansard, lxxxvii. p. 1054.

personal motives, but from the firm conviction that fidelity to party engagements—the existence and maintenance of a great party—constitutes a powerful instrument of government: I shall surrender power severely censured also by others who, from no interested motive, adhere to the principle of protection, considering the maintenance of it to be essential to the welfare and interests of the country: I shall leave a name execrated by every monopolist who, from less honourable motives, clamours for protection because it conduces to his own individual benefit: but it may be that I shall leave a name sometimes remembered with expressions of good-will in the abodes of those whose lot it is to labour, and to earn their daily bread by the sweat of their brow, when they shall recruit their exhausted strength with abundant and untaxed food, the sweeter because it is no longer leavened with a sense of injustice."

Nature of the Reform.

It was quite true that there was a popular disposition "not to agitate questions that are at the foundation of our institutions." The great reform of policy—of procedure—which had now taken place had excluded all present thoughts of organic change from the mind of the people. Inferior in importance as the late enterprise was to that of Reform of Parliament—inferior in its order, and in its import—it was yet great enough to absorb for the time the political energy of the nation. To arrest the sinking of the agricultural interests of the country, and remove the impediments to a free supply of food, were objects inferior only to any enterprise of organic change: but they were inferior. It does not follow, however, that organic change may not arise from an inferior order of reform; and in this case it was clear to those who were aware of the facts that the power under the Reform Bill discovered by Mr. Cobden of renovating county constituencies must, sooner or later, bring forth vast political results. The system of forty-shilling freehold purchase and registration, begun under the League organization, did not stop when the League dissolved itself. It proceeds, and at an accelerated rate.

Dissolution of the League. Spectator, 1846, p. 630.

On the 2nd of July, the League was "conditionally dissolved," by the unanimous vote of a great meeting of the leaders at Manchester. The body was virtually dissolved; but the Executive Council had power to call it again into existence, if occasion should arise;—that is, if attempts should be made to revive agricultural protection. Mr. Cobden here joyfully closed his seven years' task, which he had prosecuted at the expense of health, fortune, domestic comfort, and the sacrifice of his own tastes in every way. Sir R. Peel had said of him, in his closing speech, that to one man was the great work of repeal owing; and that that man was Richard Cobden: and Mr. Cobden now declared at Manchester that if Sir R. Peel had lost office, he had gained a country. The Leaguers were not called on for more than the first instalment of the quarter of a million they had resolved to raise: and out of that sum, they voted £10,000 (in his absence) to their Chairman, Mr. James Wilson.—Mr. Cobden had sacrificed at least £20,000 in the cause. The country now, at the call of the other chief Leaguers, presented him with above £80,000—not only for the purpose of acknowledging his sacrifices, but also to set him free for life for the political service of his country.

Irish Life Bill.

Early in the session, the Ministers had introduced a bill for the Protection of Life in Ireland, where the practice of night-assassination was again partially prevailing. The political jealousy of the time was exercised upon this bill;

and it was opposed by a curious medley of members in the Commons, after an easy passage in the Lords. It was thrown out in the Commons, on the same night (June 26th) when the Corn law Bill passed the Lords. The majority against the ministers was 73. Every one knew that the Peel Administration was going out, as soon as the repeal of the Corn laws was achieved; but perhaps this defeat settled the moment. On the 29th, the Duke of Wellington took leave of power in the one House, and Sir R. Peel in the other, in announcing their resignation of office.

Hansard, lxxxvii. 1027.

Resignation of Ministers.
Hansard, lxxxvii. 1039, 1040.

In one sense, Sir R. Peel might be said to take leave of power: but his moral power was destined yet to grow stronger. An old and faithful member of Opposition, Mr. Hume, said of him, on this last evening, "That no one ever left power carrying with him so much of the sympathy of the people:" and there were multitudes who could not endure the thought of losing him, at the very moment of his discovering himself to the nation in his greatest aspect. As he left the House on the night of the 29th, leaning on the arm of Sir George Clerk, he was awaited by a quiet multitude outside, who bared their heads at the sight of him, and escorted him to his house. Some of these probably hoped to hail him as Minister again some day; for it was a common idea throughout the country that, if there was only one man who could govern the country, that man would have to govern the country, whether he would or no. But he knew better. He knew that his last words were a real farewell.

Hansard, lxxxvii. 1058.

The retiring Minister.

That which he did not and could not know was the full nobleness of the position which he would henceforth hold. He had nothing more to attain. His wealth had always been great; and it was not in the power even of the sovereign to ennoble him. His honours are of a higher order than those of the peerage, and would be rather impaired than enhanced by his removal from among the Commons. In the Commons he has no party, because there is no party there: and if there were, he has withdrawn from party conflict. He speaks as from his own mind; and his words have singular weight. He sits in the legislature, a man free from personal aims of every kind, at full leisure, and in full freedom to cast light where it is wanted on any hand, to give guidance and sanction, and material for speculation and action in future years, when he will be no more seen in his place. Men of all parties seem to agree upon one point in regard to Sir R. Peel;—that his latest position in the British Legislature is the noblest that, in our period of time, can be held by any man.

CHAPTER XVI.

1842—46.

WITH the charm of a youthful sovereign and a fresh royal generation came, necessarily, the mournfulness of seeing the old drop off;—the old princes and statesmen and warriors, whose names had been familiar to us all our lives. The Duke of Sussex, the most popular of the sons of George the Third—the amiable man, the lover of books and of philosophy, the hero of a love-story in the last century, when he married Lady Augusta Murray—died in April, 1843, in the 72nd year of his age: and his cousin, the Princess Sophia of Gloucester, followed him in November of the next year, at the age of 71. At the time they died, the reading world was learning, by the Diary of Madame D'Arblay, how these affectionate cousins looked, and what they said, in the days of their early youth, when she was brilliantly handsome, and he full of grace and kindness to every body in his father's court. They had since had much pain and uneasiness in their lives; and it was time that they were at rest.—The illustrious family of the Wellesleys was breaking up. The Marquess Wellesley, who had ruled India when his brother Arthur won his first successes there, died in 1842, in his 83rd year; and his younger brother—but still some years older than the Duke of Wellington and Lord Cowley—Lord Mornington, followed in 1845. Lord Mornington was Sir R. Peel's predecessor in his early office of Secretary for Ireland. The offices which he subsequently filled were unimportant, except that of Post Master General, which he held during the short Peel administration of 1835. Lord Wellesley was a much more important man to the nation, not only by his Indian administration, but by his strenuous support of his warrior brother during the Peninsular war, when he had to contend with the timidity and carelessness of the government at home even more painfully than with the French forces abroad. What his government was in Ireland in 1822, and how his liberality excited the wrath of the Ascendancy party there, we have seen. His old age was embittered by pecuniary difficulties, such as he had contrived to trouble himself with all his life. The East India Company made liberal gifts to him, in acknowledgment of former services; and after this, his few remaining days slipped away quietly, amidst the solace of books and old friendships; though the wording of some provisions in his will seems to show that he regarded the Administration of Lord Melbourne with no more tranquillity than his friend, Lord Brougham, to whose charge he left the vindication of his memory, "confiding in his justice and honour."—An old friend and comrade of the Wellesleys, Lord Hill, died in 1842. He had won glory in Spain, Portugal, and France, and finally at Waterloo: and he earned civic gratitude by his admirable administration of the army (which may be called a civic service) between the years 1828 and 1842. No private interest or political bias ever was seen to affect his distribution of patronage—

Death of the Duke of Sussex.

Princess Sophia of Gloucester.

Marquess Wellesley.

Lord Mornington.

Annual Register, 1844. Chron. 8.

Lord Hill.

1842—46.

Sir Hudson Lowe.

Lord Grey.

Lord Canterbury.

Lord Wallace.

Lord Congleton.

keen as was the watch kept upon him by the opponents of the successive Ministries under which he served. He was 70 when he died.—In the group of old and dying men associated in our minds with our last wars, we may note Lieutenant-General Sir Hudson Lowe—perhaps the most abused man of his time. He had the misfortune to be appointed gaoler to Napoleon at St. Helena. No man could have occupied that post under any circumstances without undergoing cruel anxiety, and perpetual embarrassment: but Sir Hudson Lowe had not that support from the government at home which he had a right to expect; and they allowed him to be victimized by calumny, while the fault was theirs, if indeed the fallen Emperor's lot was less easy than it might have been made. Sir H. Lowe appears to have done all that he could—without thanks, without support, without guidance—under incessant misconstruction from the world, and intolerable insult from his captive. If there was fault, it appears to have been merely of nerve: and the wonder would have been if he could have maintained nerve and judgment under the daily irritation of his position.—Of the old statesmen and politicians, more dropped during this period. Lord Grey, after a sick retirement of a few years, died in his 82nd year, in July, 1845; and in the same month Lord Canterbury, the Speaker of the Commons for so many years, under the name of Sir Charles Manners Sutton. His age was 65.—Lord Wallace, the early friend of Jenkinson and Canning, and a holder of office under Mr. Pitt, died in 1844, with the reputation of a liberal rather than a conservative, and mourned by the friends of the liberal measures of the day. He was the predecessor of Mr. Huskisson at the Board of Trade, and had the same clear views of the advantages of free trade. While Master of the Mint, he greatly improved the coinage. He was one of the very few men who rendered substantial service in office and in parliament without exciting party feelings in others—probably because he was able to rise above them himself.—Of the liberal party, several leaders were lost at this time. Sir Henry Parnell, become Lord Congleton, who did as much as a Member of Parliament well could do towards financial reform, died by his own hand in a state of nervous disease, in 1842. He was Secretary at War in the early days of Lord Grey's Administration: but he did not like the financial proceedings of the Whigs, and he resigned in a few months—a measure absolutely necessary, if he objected to Lord Althorp's projects being attributed to his own principles. As we have before seen, he disclaimed all participation in Lord Althorp's budgets; and it was necessary that he should resign, to do this. Under Lord Melbourne, he was Paymaster of the Forces. As a leading member of the Excise Commission, he rendered important service. Lord Congleton had nearly completed his 66th year at the time of his unhappy death. His place in the House of Lords remains unoccupied, his son and heir being a member of the community of Plymouth Brethren.

Sir Matthew Wood.

Sir Francis Burdett.

The staunch old liberal, Alderman Wood, of late Sir Matthew Wood, so well remembered as the brave host of Queen Caroline, at the most critical turn of her fortunes, died in a good old age, in 1843.—And in the next year the once famous Radical, Sir Francis Burdett. He was no longer a Radical: and it was a misfortune to the liberal cause that he had ever been one. He was a weak and vain man—fond of notoriety and scenes, capable of going to prison for libel amidst popular sympathy, and of being found teaching his son to read Magna Charta, when called on by the officers of justice on that errand; but he was not capable of the silent self-denial, the long perseverance, the patient labour and good-temper, necessary to the support and furtherance of the cause in adverse times, and up to the moment of success. He fell back; and, falling back, was rejected by Westminster in 1837; and from that time, he became an avowed Conservative, sitting for North Wiltshire on that interest. He had many requisites for popularity; and he long enjoyed it: but it did not cheer the end of his life; for the mode of his political change was not one which could be regarded with respect by either old or new allies. He died a few days after his wife, in January, 1844, in the 74th year of his age.

Sir Wm. Follett.

—Sir R. Peel's Attorney-General, Sir William W. Follett, a man who wanted only health to have raised him to the highest legal and political honours, died in office in 1845—the Ministers attending his funeral. He was only 46.—

Sir Wm. Nott.

One of the heroes of our late Indian wars, Major-General Sir William Nott, died very soon after attaining the honours and rewards assigned him for his share in redeeming the disgrace of the Affghan war. The Queen gave him honours; parliament voted him thanks; and the East India Company presented him with 1000*l.* a year for his life. He returned ill in health; and it is supposed that the excitement of his welcome, especially in his native town of Carmarthen, was too much for him; for he presently sank under disease of the heart. He had reached his 63rd year.

Sir Robert Ker Porter.

A few centuries earlier, Sir Robert Ker Porter would have been a hero of Romance: and, as it was, his history has more of the heroic and romantic about it than we look for in our time. His destiny seems to have been determined by no less romantic a person than Flora Macdonald, who fixed his attention on a battle-piece in her house, and explained to him that it was one of the battles of 1745. He was made to be a painter; and this incident, occurring when he was only nine or ten years old, made him the painter of that picture, the storming of Seringapatam, which set all artists wondering what lot could be in store for the youth who, at nineteen, could achieve such a work in less time than most men would require to plan it. The picture was destroyed in a fire; but the sketches remained; and many other battle-pieces by the same hand. Young Porter spent much of his life in Russia, and married a Russian princess. He travelled over the most interesting parts of Asia, and made the world the wiser for what he saw. He was next painting sacred subjects for altar-pieces at Venezuela, where he was British Consul; and, after seeing what he could of South America, he died at last at St. Petersburg, of apoplexy brought on by the Russian cold, after the heats of Venezuela. He was the brother of the novelists, Jane and Anna Maria Porter. His death took place on the 4th of May, 1842, in the 63rd year of his age.

Lord Elgin.

Lord Elgin, who gave us the marbles in the British Museum, died in 1841. While our Ambassador at the Porte, he employed his time and efforts in securing Greek sculptures and medals, in obtaining plans, measurements and elevations of buildings, moulds and casts; and in 1816 the House of Commons decided to purchase the Elgin marbles for £35,000. Lord Elgin lived to be 74, and to see something of the benefit the nation derived from his

1842—46. labours in Greece. Many natural regrets have been expressed by travellers at the removal of the sculptures from their own place: but subsequent events have made it clear that if they had not been secured, nothing but their fragments would have been left by this time. Their removal has made the Greek wars of recent years one degree less disastrous.

Sir F. Chantrey. It is a well-known anecdote of Nollekens, that when, in the Exhibition of 1806, his eye fell on a bust sent in by a novice, he said, "It is a splendid work. Let the man be known. Remove one of my busts, and put this in its place." The man was Chantrey—then 24 years old. From that time he was abundantly known, and uniformly successful. He never had any struggles against fortune to tell of, his only cross in life being that his father had wished to make him an attorney when he desired to be "a carver." The two works by which he is perhaps best known, the statue of Lady Louisa Russell, and the Sleeping Children in Lichfield Cathedral, were from designs by Stothard. He had not poetic faculty for such designs; but he excelled in monumental sculpture of a simply grave order—as his statues of Watt, and Horner, and Canning, and many more are proofs. Having no near relations, Chantrey left the reversion of his property, after its use by his widow, for the encouragement of Art in Great Britain. When he was building a mausoleum for himself, he said to his friend and assistant, Allan Cunningham, that it should be made large enough to hold them both: but Allan had no mind for this. "No," said he, "I should not like, even when I am dead, to be so shut up. I would far rather rest where the daisies would grow over my head." They departed within a year of each other, Chantrey going first, and leaving a generous provision for Cunningham—to whose poetical mind he owed more than even to his zealous attachment. Chantrey died suddenly, of heart-disease, on the 25th of November, 1841; and Cunningham on the 5th of the next November. The sculptor was 59 years of age; the poet, 56. It is as a poet, and especially as a song-writer, that Allan Cunningham's name will live. He attempted various walks of literature, and is well known by his lives of British Painters; but his fame rests more securely on his ballads and songs. We shall not forget "It's hame and it's hame;" or, "A wet sheet and a flowing sea."

Allan Cunningham.

The Hoflands. There was a great sweep among the painters during this period. Hofland, the landscape painter, was husband to the Mrs. Hofland, whose tales for children were so unboundedly popular for some time after their appearance. The Edgeworths testified to their great value in Ireland; and Queen Charlotte patronized them in England. The husband, too, was favoured by the old King; yet the Hoflands suffered cruelly from embarrassments, caused by an unfortunate contract with the Duke of Marlborough, the heavy expenses of which fell, not on the peer but the artist. Both worked hard, as long as years and health would allow—the husband in teaching as well as painting, and the wife in literature and in domestic cares. Mr. Hofland died in January, 1843, and his wife in November, 1844.—In 1844, we lost the aged Nicholson, one of the founders of the Society of Painters in Water Colours, whose last effort, when dying at the age of 91, was to have himself lifted up, to brighten a dark cloud in a picture of a shipwreck:—and Geddes, the portrait painter and Associate of the Royal Academy, best known, perhaps, by his picture of

Nicholson.

Geddes.

the discovery of the Regalia of Scotland, with a portrait of Scott:—and Grieve, the first Scene-painter of his time, who raised that kind of work into a department of Art:—and, to the regret of all England, Callcott, the respected and beloved. He was early destined to music, with and by his elder brother: but he turned to painting; and, at first, to portraits, under the teaching of Hoppner. After 1803, however, he devoted himself to landscape painting, and earned the title of the English Claude. He married the well-known writer, Maria Graham, whose health was undermined before this second marriage. His devoted watching over her destroyed his health, and impaired in proportion his professional efforts; and when she died, in 1842, he was more like a man of 80 than of 63; and he was no longer able to paint. In 1844, the Queen made him Conservator of the Royal pictures; an office which was valuable to him, not only for its honour and profit, but because it afforded him occupation and interest which were not too great for his strength. Up to the last week of his life, he exerted himself to complete an improved catalogue of the Queen's pictures, and then died, on the 23rd of November, after a decline of at least six years. His serene expanses, wide horizons, melting distances, rippling waters, and lucid Dutch river scenes, will always refresh and gratify the eye, through all changes of taste in Art.

Grieve.

Sir A. Callcott.

The year 1845 was a sad one too. In January, died the aged painter Smirke, the father of the two architects of well-known name, and a Royal Academician from the year of Sir Joshua Reynolds's death, 1792:—and Phillips, also a Royal Academician, and one of the most eminent of English portrait painters. He succeeded Fuseli in 1824 in the professorship of Painting in the Royal Academy, delivering ten lectures which have a good reputation: and he wrote a good deal on painting in Rees's Cyclopædia: but his fame rests on his portraits. He established something better than fame in the hearts of brother artists, and of all who know what he did for the protection and benefit of the profession.—In the same year died, aged only 33, a man from whom great things were hoped—William John Müller, a landscape and costume painter of high excellence. He followed his art into the wildest recesses of Greece, and high up towards the sources of the Nile. At a great sacrifice of connexion, money, and time, he accompanied, at his own request, Sir Charles Fellows's last expedition to Lycia, and brought back sketches of extraordinary value, which sold for above £4,000 after his death. Some pictures, from which he hoped every thing that could compensate him for his sacrifices, were so hung in the Exhibition of 1845 as to be unnoticed. The disappointment preyed on his mind, and prostrated his strength. Whether disease had before fixed itself fatally in his frame, there is no saying now: but he pined and sank, dying of enlargement of the heart, on the 8th of September following his disappointment.—A sadder event than even this gave a shock to the whole nation a few months afterwards. In June, 1846, our Historical Painter, Haydon, destroyed himself, in anguish under poverty and mortification. He was a man of temperate habits, but incapable of prudence and skill in the management of affairs. He was in debt almost all his life; and he discouraged his patrons by making his pictures too large to be hung, and by other perversities which another kind of man would have avoided without injury to his artistical aim. It is not difficult to account for his misfortunes:

Smirke.

Phillips.

Müller.

Haydon.

but there is no one who does not deeply mourn them. There is no one who cannot feel what must have been the anguish of a man so sensitive when no commissions came in, when his exhibition in April so failed as that only four persons came the first day, while crowds were struggling for entrance to see Tom Thumb. "How different it would have been twenty-six years ago!" he wrote in his Diary. He became grave and silent in his family, and superstitious in his entries in his Diary. In one week, he noted down the visitors to his exhibition as 133½, while 12,000 went to see Tom Thumb—not asking himself, unhappily, how few of the 12,000 he would have cared to see in his room. On the 16th of June, he wrote to the Prime Minister and two others, stating that he had a heavy sum to pay. "Tormented by D'Israeli, harassed by public business," as the grateful artist wrote, "Sir R. Peel was the only one who replied:" and the reply was instant and kind, enclosing £50. Six days afterwards, occurs the last entry—Lear's words, "Stretch me no longer on this rough world:" and before the ink was dry, the overwrought sufferer had shot himself. His family were taken immediate care of by the Queen, the Minister, and the friends of Art and artists. Haydon did what he could to raise the ideal and practice of historical painting in England. He lectured, and wrote, and taught, and discoursed. But he was not one who could be made secure and happy by any thing that he could do for Art, or any thing that men could do for him, in a state of society like our own. If he could ever have fitted any time, it was certainly not our own. He saw historical painting more likely to thrive in England than ever before, and knew that it was partly by his own efforts: yet there seemed no room for hope that any picture of his would appear on the walls of the new Houses of Parliament. The Fine Arts Commission took no notice of him: and when, by opening his exhibition, he invited the public to judge his claims, the public took no heed; and his heart was broken. His most appreciated work appears to have been "Christ entering Jerusalem," which he exhibited in 1820. Another which, through the engraving, roused a wide popular sympathy, was "Napoleon at St. Helena." Benjamin Robert Haydon was 60 years old.—Of musicians, there died during the period, Joseph Count Mazzinghi, at the age of 80, who had actually been chosen Director at the Opera House at the age of 19, and who continued a popular composer during his long life:—and of actors, the great laugh-maker, Liston. Of all things in the world, Liston was, first, usher in a school: and when he took a fancy for the stage, it was for tragedy. Nevertheless, it was reserved for him to make £100 per week in comedy; and to make it fairly, for, while he was yet receiving only £60 per week, as Paul Pry, the manager cleared £7,000 in the season. In the provinces, he often received from £250 to £350 per week; an indication of the English being a laughter-loving people, after all that can be said of their tendency to solicitude and solemnity. Liston was truly an artist, amidst all his license to take liberties with the public mirth. He studied his most grotesque characters as carefully as if they had been tragic. He was a man of domestic habits and irreproachable character; and he reached the age of 69 amidst the serious respect of his friends, as well as the delight of a laughing nation. He died in March, 1846, in the 70th year of his age.—Mr. Loudon's name seems to belong to the list of artists, so artistically did he instruct the public taste in gardening, planting, and rural archi-

Mazzinghi.

Liston.

L[illegible]

tecture. He was a native of Lanarkshire, and came to England in 1803, to practise as a landscape gardener, when he was only 20 years old. He travelled abroad to obtain information, and on his return published one after another of that long series of works, of which the Encyclopædia of Gardening is best known; and next to that, perhaps, his Encyclopædia of Cottage, Farm, and Village Architecture. One of his great works, the Arboretum Britannicum, involved him in difficulties which he wore himself out to surmount. His sufferings of body were of the severest kind; but his energy of mind was indomitable. His spirit of enthusiasm must have lightened and sweetened his life more than any pecuniary prosperity could have done. Among his achievements, one of the best known is the laying out of the Derby Arboretum—the great Garden presented to the people of Derby by their generous townsman, Mr. Joseph Strutt. Mr. Loudon was 60 years old when he died, in December, 1843.

Sir Charles Bell.

In 1842 occurred one of the greatest losses to the scientific world that the century has to show. But that vast discoveries become more common with every century, ours would be as much signalized by the fame of Sir Charles Bell, as the seventeenth is by that of Harvey. Harvey proved the circulation of the blood, and was believed by no physician in Europe who was above forty at the time of his death. Sir Charles Bell discovered the diversities which exist in the structure and functions of the nerves; and his demonstrations of the facts were so clear, and the consciousness of ignorance has so far extended in our more enlightened age, that the only dispute which occurred was as to who ought to appropriate the honour of the discovery. It is settled, past all controversy, that the honour belongs to Sir Charles Bell. He has pointed out to us that we have, bound up in the same sheath, nerves of sensation and nerves of motion; and, as he believed, nerves for other functions also: and it would be a bold thing to say that any discovery in connexion with our mysterious human frame was ever more important in itself, or more fraught with future significance. Sir Charles Bell did many more things, during his active and devoted life; but it is this which gives him a high place in the history of his country. He was the youngest of the four eminent brothers Bell:—Robert, the Edinburgh lawyer; the great surgeon, John; and George Joseph, the law professor in Edinburgh University, being his elder brothers. Sir Charles Bell died suddenly, but not to the surprise of his friends, of *angina pectoris*—a disease of some standing—on the 27th of May, 1842, aged 68. He was knighted by William IV. on his accession, together with Herschel, Brewster, Ivory, and other men of science. His private life was simple, serene, and happy; but he suffered much anxiety of mind about professional matters; and latterly especially about the relation of his profession to the law: and these anxieties are believed to have hastened his death.—It was a disease of the heart which, in the next year, carried off Mr. Kemp, the Chemical Lecturer in the Edinburgh University, who laid the world under obligations to him before his departure at the age of 36. It was he who introduced amalgamated zinc plates into galvanic batteries. "Let us never forget," wrote an eminent man, after his death, "to whom we owe this discovery, which of itself enables galvanic batteries to be used in the arts. Ages to come will, perhaps, have to thank the inventor, whom we are too apt to forget; yet, the obligation from

Kemp.

the public to Mr. Kemp is the same." He distinguished himself before the British Association, at Edinburgh, in 1836, by his display of the results of his bold investigations. He died in December, 1843.—In August, 1844, died the President of the Astronomical Society, Mr. Francis Baily. He left the Stock Exchange, where he had made an ample fortune, in 1825, and devoted himself to philosophical pursuits for the rest of his life—nearly 20 years. He organized the Astronomical Society; improved the Nautical Almanac; stimulated the new series of Pendulum experiments which exposed so many reasons for new care; aided the Commission of Weights and Measures; aided the Astronomical Catalogue of the British Association; gave to the world the correspondence and catalogues of Flamsteed; and wrote the best treatise that exists on Life Annuities and Insurance. It is a pleasure to record such instances as these of the use which English men of business make of their wealth and leisure, when they have had enough of money-getting, and have preserved a taste for higher things.—An aged man died in the same summer, whose name will never be lost from the records of science—Dr. Dalton. Dalton was an usher in north country schools till he was seven-and-twenty, when he was recommended to the chair of Mathematics and Natural Philosophy at the New College, Manchester. This was in 1793; and at Manchester he lived for the rest of his days, dying there in July 1844, in the 78th year of his age. He saw Paris, and went to London occasionally; and was every where received with honour; for his discoveries were known all over the world; and it was pure pleasure to pay homage to one so simple and benign. His body lay in state in the Town-hall of Manchester, and was visited by more than 40,000 persons in one day. His Atomic Theory, the discovery of which he entered upon in 1803, is considered, at present, probably the most important contribution ever made to Chemistry. Dr. Thomas Thomson first understood and made known the scope of it: Wollaston instantly apprehended it: and Davy followed, after an interval of resistance and ridicule. By the application of mathematics to chemistry, and Dalton's subsequent efforts to bring chemical analysis nearer to a chance of correctness, the knowledge of chemical combinations has been marvellously simplified, and the processes of chemical analysis have been raised from a looseness too like hap-hazard to something approaching to mathematical precision. Such precision extends from scientific discovery to the arts of life; and manufacturers are benefitted at the same time with the experiments of the laboratory. This discovery of Dalton's is sometimes called by the name he chose—the Atomic Theory; sometimes by Wollaston's—the theory of Chemical Equivalents; sometimes by Davy's—the theory of Chemical Proportions: but, under every name, the laws of relative proportion laid down by Dalton are confirmed by every improvement in the practice of chemical analysis. He has been called the legislator of his science, which was before merely empirical. He was framed for scientific despotism, by his sagacity, his simplicity, and his self-reliance. He was a Quaker; and no member of his sect led a life more regular and innocent—without austerity, dulness, vanity, or spiritual pride. In face, he was like Newton; and, like Newton, he was never married. He did not overwork his brain. His brain was strong, and his nervous system good: and he recreated himself with a

Francis Baily.

Dalton.

game at bowls every Thursday, and with a sight of his native Cumberland mountains every summer. Long before his death, he was a member of almost every Royal Academy and Scientific Institute in Europe.

THEODORE E. HOOK.

MATURIN.

BANIM.

CAPTAIN HAMILTON.

BECKFORD.

Among the literary men who died during this period, the most difficult to class is Theodore E. Hook, so various in character are his works. He began with the drama, and gave several comedies and farces to the stage before he was twenty-three. Then he turned to novel writing; and then, as Editor of the John Bull, to politics, or what he called such. Then he wrote novels again, and biography; his lives of Kelly, and of Sir David Baird, and his 'Sayings and Doings,' 'Love and Pride,' and 'Gilbert Gurney,' being perhaps the best known of his later works. Theodore Hook's life was a merry, but not a happy one. He was disgraced through carelessness in his office of Accountant-General at the Mauritius, by which there was a deficiency in the Treasury. He made enemies on every hand by the libellous tone of his newspaper; and he was perpetually overwrought by toil while wasting his resources of purse, health, and time, in dissipation. He was, however, the leading wit of his time in the old-fashioned method of London dissipation: and in his career we seem to see revived, with little alteration, the raking poor author of each former century. Theodore Hook was only 52 when he died, in August, 1841.—Maturin, an Irish clergyman, who wrote two novels in a Byronic style which became popular, 'Bertram' and 'Melmoth the Wanderer,' died in 1842:—and in the same year, died another Irish novelist of far higher merit, John Banim, author of the 'O'Hara Tales,' 'The Boyne Water,' 'Father Connell,' and others. It was Banim who first opened up those aspects of Irish life which have since been exhibited by Carleton, Griffin, and others; and which are as unlike the pictures of the Edgeworths and the Morgans, as Fielding is unlike Richardson. The tragedy of humble life was Banim's department; and he wrought in it with great power. He had himself but too much experience of the tragic side of human life. He attempted editorship at 17 years old—married at 20—suffered from sickness and poverty for many years—a poverty which seemed scarcely reduced by a pension granted him in 1837; and died in his 42nd year.—Captain Hamilton ranks among the novelists for his 'Cyril Thornton:' but he is no less known by his contributions to Blackwood's Magazine, and his 'Men and Manners in America.' He was a soldier, filling up his leisure after the peace with literary occupation. His works show a highly trained ability; and his calm temper and judgment and admirable manners, appearing through his writings to those who never saw his face, gave a weight to what he said, which is sometimes desired in vain by men of greater power.—In curious companionship with the poor novelists of the time, the Hooks, and Banims, and Hoods, we find Mr. Beckford's name—the Wm. Beckford who was born to £100,000 a year. His true monument is his novel 'Vathek,' though he spent enormous amounts of money in building his wonderful edifice of Fonthill. His great tower, 300 feet high, fell down—was rebuilt—and fell again: but 'Vathek' remains. The nine days' wonder of Mr Beckford's eccentricities and the Fonthill sale has long been forgotten; but the vivacity and power of his 'Letters on Italy, Spain, and Portugal,' are as keen as ever. Mr. Beckford was the son and heir of the Alderman Beckford, whose celebrated extempore speech to George the

1842—46. Third is engraved on his monument in Guildhall. The production of 'Vathek' seems to have been an instance of impromptu ability quite as remarkable. Mr. Beckford used to declare that it was written at one sitting,—that is, in three days and two nights, during which he never took off his clothes. It was written in French, and afterwards translated without his knowledge, and with little skill. Byron used to think it the best attempt at the oriental style of fiction ever made by an European. It appeared first at Lausanne, in 1784. This carries us very far back: but Mr. Beckford was then 24 years of age. He lived sixty years longer, dying at Bath in May, 1844.—Thomas Hood, the author of 'Tylney Hall,' was classed among the novelists on that account: but he belongs to other departments too. He was a wit, as every page of every one of his writings may show; and we have the 'Plea of the Midsummer Fairies,' and 'Eugene Aram's Dream,' and the 'Song of the Shirt,' to prove him a poet. He was an editor of Annuals and of Magazines: but our interest in him is from the remarkable union, in his genius, of wit, sense, and pathos. It is true that we never see real wit apart from sound sense, and rarely from pathos: but in Hood, all so abounded together, and in the strictest union, as to give almost an impression of a fresh order of genius. He was one of the sufferers of his order—a sufferer from sickness and poverty: and he was in the depths of these troubles, when he had cause, like poor Haydon, to wonder how the Prime Minister, in the midst of harassing cares and a load of business, could attend to his interests, and consult his feelings with all the nicety of leisure. The letter of Sir R. Peel to Hood, announcing the grant of a pension, remains one of the chief honours of the great statesman. Poor Hood died soon after; the pension was granted to his widow; and in a few months she also died. The children were taken care of; as it was indispensable to the conscience of society that they should be; for their father was truly a social benefactor. He was always on the right side in matters of morals and of feeling—full of faith in good, and sympathy in all that was generous and true. His satire was directed upon whatever was foul, false, and selfish. He was 47 when he died in May, 1845.

Thomas Hood.

In the same year, a few weeks earlier, died untimely a man who was held in warm regard by his friends, and in respect by those of the public who knew what his services were; Laman Blanchard, who edited, in his time, three newspapers, and the Monthly Magazine, and contributed largely to periodicals. His consistent and enlightened political opinions and conduct were of service to the public morality of his time; and his early loss was deplored for other reasons than the sadness of the mode in which it happened. The illness and death of his wife had so worn him that brain-seizures came on; and after one of these, in a state of nervous prostration, he destroyed himself. His orphans, too, found protection from society.—Under the date 1817, our history has exhibited the narrative and indicated the effects of the trials of William Hone for blasphemy and libel. It was pointed out that we owe to those trials the vast improvement in our libel law, and in its application. William Hone wrought well in literature after those days, giving us the volumes that Southey and other men of curious knowledge have praised so highly;—the 'Every Day Book,' the 'Table Book,' and the 'Year Book.' Mr. Hone was in his 64th year when he died in 1842.—In the same year we

Laman Blanchard.

Ante, i. p. 141. Wm. Hone.

ROBERT MUDIE.

lost Robert Mudie, whose works on Natural History are true poems. He was a self-educated Scotchman; and when he wrote about things that he understood, as in his 'Feathered Tribes of the British Islands,' he plunged his readers into the depths of Nature as the true poet alone can do. He is another example, as White of Selborne and Audubon were before him, of the indissoluble connexion between a nice and appreciative observation of nature and the kindling of a spirit of poetry.

JOHN FOSTER.

HENRY NELSON COLERIDGE.

Perhaps the most successful essayist of his time was the Rev. John Foster, last of Bristol. His 'Essays' passed through eighteen editions during his life; and they are still spreading. There is no great precision in the thoughts: but the tone of morality is pure, and the views are original and broad, while the style is eminently interesting. The volume was one which met the wants of the time; and if some of the matter is vague, and the views narrow, they were a welcome escape from the shallow prosings which they superseded. Mr. Foster published one other volume — on 'The Evils of Popular Ignorance,' and a mass of contributions to the 'Eclectic Review.' He died in 1843, in the 74th year of his age.—Henry Nelson Coleridge, nephew of the poet, and editor of his 'Literary Remains,' died in middle age in 1843. He published an 'Introduction to the Study of the Greek Classic Poets:' but he is more widely known by a whimsical volume, full of beauty of description—'Six Months in the West Indies.'

JOHN WRIGHT.

DR. CARY.

The year after, in February, 1844, died a Mr. John Wright, who would have remained obscure, in spite of much literary effort, but for his sagacity and industry in regard to a single enterprise. The Thirteenth Parliament of Great Britain is commonly called the Unreported Parliament; but was saved from being wholly dumb to a future generation by Sir Henry Cavendish having diligently reported its debates to the best of his ability. Sir Henry Cavendish's notes, written in short-hand, were found among the Bridgewater MSS. in the British Museum: and Mr. Wright made the key to the short-hand, transcribed the debates, and was printing them, with illustrations of the parliamentary proceedings of the time, when the useful work was stopped by his death, at the age of 73.—Henry F. Cary, the translator of Dante, and also of 'The Birds' of Aristophanes, and of 'Pindar's Odes,' died in 1844. His Dante was little noticed till Coleridge made it known; after which it remained the standard translation. Dr. Cary was a most industrious man of letters, both in his office of assistant-librarian at the British Museum, and in his favourite labour of editing our native poets and writing their lives, in continuation of Johnson's Biographies.

THOMAS CAMPBELL.

The poets Southey and Campbell died during this period; men as opposite in their natures and modes of living as poets can be conceived to be. It will probably be undisputed that Campbell was the greater poet, and Southey the nobler man. While our language lasts, Campbell's lyrics will make music in it. While Great Britain has mariners, his 'Mariners of England' will kindle a glow in the nation's heart: and scores of lines from his most successful poem, the 'Pleasures of Hope,' have become so hackneyed that few people, on hearing them, know where they come from, or fail to suppose they must be Shakspere's. He was known all over the world as the Author of the 'Pleasures of Hope;' and used to complain of it as the introduction to every act

1842—46. of his social life. He could not be born as the Author of the Pleasures of Hope; but he was so announced on his marriage, on his travels, on his introduction to great personages, on every reappearance before the world as an author: and a friend who had heard him thus complain, tells us that it was with a sort of mournful amusement that, looking into the grave in Westminster Abbey at the last moment, he saw on the coffin-plate, "Thomas Campbell, Author of the Pleasures of Hope," &c., &c. Campbell's own favourite among his poems was 'Gertrude of Wyoming:' but, well as the public liked it, his fame still rested on his earlier productions. Campbell's constitution and temperament were not favourable to the conditions of a happy life. He sometimes enjoyed greatly; he often suffered bitterly; and he was unable to merge his self-regards either in sustained industry or in the interests of others. With many generous impulses, and strong claims to respect in his relations of son and brother, he was not a serene or happy man. After a life of strong excitements and conflicting sensibilities, he died on the 15th of June, 1844, at Boulogne, where he had settled a year before. He was in his 68th year. His funeral in Westminster Abbey was attended with all the pomp which could mark the national gratitude to a great poet.—Very unlike this was Southey's genius and Southey's career. His life was one of purity and virtue almost austere. His domestic affections were warm; his domestic temper venerable and sweet; his self-denial and benevolence for the sake of the erring and the helpless, were a life-long protest against the injurious laxity which enters into our estimate of the morals of genius. He was eminently happy in his life-long toils. He loved labour for itself; and he loved the subjects on which he toiled: and his conscience, nice as it was, could not but be satisfied and gratified at the spectacle of the aid and solace which, by his labours, he was able to give beyond his own family, to some who had no natural claim on him for support. In the spectacle of his social and domestic virtues, all remembrance of a bitter political and religious spirit may well be sunk. He was not a man qualified to have opinions, strictly so called. He could not sympathize in any views but those immediately held by himself; and the views which he most quarrelled with were usually those which had been, no long time before, virulently held by himself. He wrote a vast quantity; and never with carelessness or haste. Of his poems, 'Thalaba' is, no doubt, the greatest blessing to his most youthful readers, to whom its pure sweetness of morals and oriental imagery are most attractive: and 'Roderick' is perhaps decided to be of the highest order. He was a graceful essayist and critic, as is shown in his contributions to the 'Quarterly Review:' a spirited biographer, as his popular 'Life of Nelson' may show: and a painstaking and elegant historian, as we see in his 'History of the Peninsular War.' His Essays and Histories were vitally injured by his imperfections as a thinker, and his tendency to prejudice and intellectual passion: but he was always earnest and sincere—always kindly in act when most intolerant in thought. He suffered bitterly from the illness and death of his first wife: and so bitterly as never to recover his power of mind. He formed a second marriage while already sinking in health; and became lost in mind, through pressure on the brain, three years before his death, which took place on the 21st of March, 1843. He had been Poet Laureate since 1813, and was succeeded in the

Robert Southey.

office by Mr. Wordsworth, who holds it now.—Before quitting the review of the literary men who died during the period before us, we must name with them the publisher who was the friend of all literary men. John Murray, the prince of publishers, introduced Scott and Byron to each other's acquaintance; and Southey and Crabbe; and Scott and Wilkie. He was a man of a noble heart in regard to literature and authors; and happily, a noble prosperity enabled him to gratify his generous dispositions. His pride was in giving great gifts of literature to the world, and of solace to their authors. It was he who presented us with the 'Quarterly Review,' and most of the greatest works of the greatest men during the present century; for he began business when he came of age in 1799, and carried it on in full vigour till his death in 1843. His first highly successful enterprise was Mrs. Rundell's 'Cookery Book;' and the next the 'Quarterly Review,' which he set up in 1809, and which remains the property of his house. When, in after times, men read of the generous and enlightened publishers who first succeeded to the patrons of authors, it will not be forgotten that our age had a John Murray.

John Murray.

Of other benefactors of the century, we find that Dr. Birkbeck, the founder of Mechanics' Institutes, died in 1841, in the 66th year of his age. When the departure of this excellent man was known, there was sorrow over all the land where the working-men met for self and mutual instruction.—Another eminent friend of popular enlightenment was William Allen, who aided in founding the British and Foreign School Society, and in seeing what could be done by the Lancasterian Schools. He was also one of the most active of the indefatigable Abolitionists, and aided first in the extinction of the British slave trade, and then in the overthrow of Colonial Slavery. He was a man of science too, the friend of Davy, and for many years Lecturer on Chemistry and Natural Philosophy at Guy's Hospital and the Royal Institution. After a life of varied good works, the enlightened and benevolent William Allen, whom the Friends had the honour of including in their sect, died in the 74th year of his age, at the close of 1843.—Two of his friends and fellow-labourers soon followed him—Mrs. Fry in 1845, in her 65th year; and Thomas Clarkson in 1846, in the 86th year of his age. If it be true, as we are wont to say, that the distinctive social effect of Christianity is its inducing the care of the helpless who were before left to perish, the existence of such persons as these three—Allen, Clarkson, and Mrs. Fry—at one time, and in close companionship—marks our age as a Christian one, after all its drawbacks. The ignorant, the guilty, and the enslaved, were the chief care in life to these friends, who might have passed their years in ease, and indolence, or the gratification of merely intellectual tastes: but it suited their noble natures better to go out on the highways of the sea and land, and search through dark alleys, and disgusting prisons, and hellish slave-ships, to seek and save that which was lost. They sustained, moreover, the most irksome and dispiriting toil, the most disheartening disappointment—a long and painful probation of heart and mind—in pursuit of their objects; and they died, all faithful to the aims of their life. When Mrs. Fry entered the room in Newgate where 160 guilty and ignorant wretches were shut up, and in her serene and noble countenance brought them the hope which they had believed to be for ever shut out, she began that reform in the treatment of moral disease which, however tentative

Dr. Birkbeck.

William Allen.

Elizabeth Fry and Thomas Clarkson.

1842—46. and vague at present, can never now stop short of completion. And when Clarkson sat down, his heart throbbing with his new knowledge of the wrongs of the negro, and resolved to devote his life to the redemption of that helpless race, the greatest step was taken ever known to have been taken by any man for the assertion and establishment of human rights. And Clarkson was not one to forsake an aim. He lived for the cause to the very last, and drew in others to live for it. Mistakes were made by his coadjutors and himself; for, in enterprises so new and vast, the agents have to learn as they go: but the national conscience was roused, the principles of human liberty were asserted, the national testimony was transferred to the side of right, and the emancipation of all races of men was made a question merely of time. As it was Clarkson who began, and who stimulated Wilberforce and all other good men to carry on the work, whom could we place higher than Clarkson on our list of benefactors? Wilberforce and all other good men assigned him the first place; and there he remains and will remain.

Miss Flaherty. A Roman Catholic lady, well educated, and deeply impressed with the advantages of education, was living in the neighbourhood of London during the whole of the period of our History, watching the results of the efforts made by Lord Brougham and others for the extension and improvement of education in England. Her name was Flaherty. She was not rich; but she was unmarried, and free to live as she chose, and dispose of her income as she would. She chose to live frugally, and to ride in an omnibus instead of a better carriage, that she might have means to aid the extension of Education. In 1836, she presented to the Council of University College, the sum of £5,000 in the 3½ per Cents., out of which scholarships have been founded. This lady has shown us that there is nothing in our modern civilization—our omnibuses and unsectarian schools—which can preclude the antique spirit and practice of love and good works: and in this the admirable Mary Flaherty has perhaps left us as true a benefit as in the scholarships which bear her name. She died in 1845, aged 84.

The creation of wealth, and consequently of human life, by means of the Cotton manufacture is pointed out as one of the leading social events of the last century. It is reckoned that the cotton manufacture has added permanently 2,000,000 to our population. Something analogous, on a smaller, but still on a great scale, has been effected in our own time by the agricultural improvements of one man—Mr. Coke, of Norfolk, who died Earl of Leicester. By the simple and virtuous method of devoting his mind and life to the improvement of the land, Mr. Coke caused a vast permanent increase of wealth, and therefore of labour and subsistence, and therefore of human life. In a single village, where he found 162 inhabitants when he entered on his property, he left 1,000: and for many miles round, a country before poor and almost barren was left by him fruitful and well-peopled. He found his own rental increased from £2,200 to above £20,000: but that was of small account in his eyes, in comparison with the stimulus given to agricultural improvement by his example. The Holkham Sheep-shearing, at which Mr. Coke annually entertained 300 guests for several days, roused a fine spirit among the landed proprietors of England and the farmers of Norfolk, and caused Mr. Coke to be looked upon as one of the chief social benefactors of his time. While in the House

Mr. Coke.

Dr. Swiney.

Peter Purcell.

Marquess of Westminster.

of Commons, he was a sturdy Liberal. When the Reform Bill passed, he thought he might be spared from the political world, aged as he then was. He was always called "the first Commoner of England;" but, in 1837, when 85 years of age, he was made Earl of Leicester. He reached the age of 90, dying in June, 1842.—There were benefactors of Mrs. Flaherty's order in the cause of agricultural improvements during this period. Dr. Swiney, resident in Camden Town, an eccentric gentleman in some respects, did an act of sober goodness in leaving £5,000 to the trustees of the British Museum, for the establishment of a lectureship on Geology; and another £5,000 to the Society of Arts, to provide once in every five years, 100 guineas, to be presented, in a goblet of equal value, to the British freeholder who should reclaim the largest extent of waste lands. Dr. Swiney died in 1844.—In 1846, died Mr. Peter Purcell of Dublin, who was mainly instrumental in forming the Royal Agricultural Improvement Society, and who did in Ireland, on a smaller scale, what Mr. Coke was doing in England. He became wealthy through the improvement of land—caring less for his wealth for its own sake than as a proof open to all eyes of the direction in which the welfare of Ireland lay. He withdrew from politics, in which he had once been as much involved as any man, and engaged as many of his neighbours as he could in the interests of improved husbandry. More and more labourers were employed; the political temper of his neighbours improved; he grew wealthy; and when he was gone, all men saw what a benefactor he had been.—When Mr. Coke was called the first Commoner of England, the Marquess of Westminster was believed to be "the richest subject in the empire." His importance in our eyes arises, not from the amount of his wealth, but from the mode in which its increase was provided for during this period. The Pimlico estate, before considered a vast property, now has upon it the new squares of Belgrave and Eaton, with Eccleston Street, Wilton Place, and all the new city of palaces which foreigners now look upon as one of the marvels of London. The ultimate rental of this district is scarcely calculable. The Marquess of Westminster had besides a noble library, including a mass of valuable ancient MSS. and one of the finest picture galleries in the kingdom, which was liberally opened to the public. The Marquess of Westminster was a steady Whig for the last forty years of his life, after having entered the political world under the auspices of Mr. Pitt. He was raised from his earldom to his Marquisate by William IV. But among all of either title by whom he was preceded or may be followed, he will ever be distinguished by his creations on his Pimlico estate.

Throughout our History, some grateful mention has been made of the benefactors that society has lost during our period of thirty years. It is unnatural to conclude without some grateful mention of those who remained among us at the close of the period. Yet how little can be said while they yet live! How presumptuous it seems to suppose that we can estimate their influence on society, or set forth what they have done! It is only with regard to a very few that even a word can yet be ventured—a few whose social influence was as unquestionable in 1846 as it can ever be to another generation. To a future generation must be left the duty and privilege of honouring a hundred more.

George Stephenson. Barry. Macready. Turner.

We have seen something of what railways are likely to do in changing and advancing our civilization. It is to the greatest of our engineers, George Stephenson, who was living at the expiration of this period, that this change is owing, more than to any other man. His achievement lies, too, exactly within our period; for it was in 1816 that Mr. Stephenson took out a patent, in conjunction with Mr. Dodd and Mr. Losh, under which locomotives were set forth upon colliery railways near Newcastle-upon-Tyne. Between that date and the close of our history, Mr. Stephenson's plans and works have spread over the land, till there is probably hardly an individual in the kingdom whose existence is not in some way affected by what has been done.—Then, we have, instead of the Cathedral of old, a Palace of National Council, which is the truest and fittest direction for the spirit of Architecture to take in our age, and under our political constitution: and Mr. Barry is our architect. In our splendid Houses of Parliament he has built his own monument; and if, as one of the Arts of Peace, architecture has risen and improved during the period, Mr. Barry has been, by many other works scattered through our towns, the chief educator of the public taste.—In a widely different department of training, we have had a guide whose name should be remembered by the countrymen of Shakspere. Mr. Macready has led the nation back again from some foolish wanderings to the real Shakspere. The Kembles presented the chief characters of Shakspere with a glory which could not be surpassed: but Mr. Macready has evidenced a faith in the popular mind for which the popular heart should be grateful. He has not only presented many characters in his own person with extreme intellectual power and skill, but he has brought these immortal plays before the public eye in their integrity, and trusted to the general mind to prefer them to meaner things.—In painting we have Turner whose life has been a plea for the study of Nature instead of merely the old Masters: and we have his works to show how ever new Nature is, when contemplated by a mind which owes its training to Art but not its conceptions.

Wordsworth. Joanna Baillie. Rogers. Alfred Tennyson.

May it not be said that this is the service which, in another department, has been rendered us by Wordsworth? We have a great gift in his lofty eloquence, and in his vindication of all human sympathies: but it appears probable that a future generation will be most grateful to him for having brought us up out of a misleading conventionalism in poetry to a recognition and contemplation of Nature in subject and in expression. It was long before the critical world could be disabused; but the effort was met by popular sympathy, wherever it could be reached, from the beginning; and the popular sympathy long ago rose above all the opposition of an outworn criticism.—It was before our period that Joanna Baillie wrote the plays which turned the heads of the reading world; but she is among us still, more honoured than ever, if less worshipped.—And we have still her aged friend, Mr. Rogers, whose chief poem stimulated Campbell to write his 'Pleasures of Hope.' The quiet gentle beauty of Mr. Rogers's chief poem, the 'Pleasures of Memory,' made its way to the general heart: and its early fame has not been obscured by other good deeds of Mr. Rogers, in the advancement of Art, and in generous aid to intellectual aspirants of every class.—One poet we have of such signal and peculiar power that his mind cannot but modify that of a future generation. The poems of Alfred Tennyson have certainly much of the beauty of a long-past time: but they have also a life so vivid, a truth so lucid, and a melody so inexhaustible, as to mark him the poet that cannot die.

WILSON.

John Wilson must unite the classes of poets and of essayists; for he is so entirely both that it is impossible to separate him from either. Before he was known as Christopher North, he was known as a poet: and assuredly he is much more of a poet since he has written in prose. In our periodical literature he stands alone, giving us in the form of essays and dialogues, drama, criticism, poetry, natural history, and infinite mirth, all blended together and harmonized by a spirit of inexhaustible kindliness, which renders him truly a benefactor to an age that is held to need softening and cheering even more than expanding. If any one questions whether Sir Roger de Coverley has been a blessing to men for above a century, such an one, but no other, may doubt whether Christopher North will be a blessing to men of another time.

JEFFREY.

Among the Essayists, Francis Jeffrey has ever been acknowledged supreme: and his Review, though instituted long before the period of our history, must be regarded as one of the most powerful influences of the time. No one supposes the influence to have been altogether for good; or the principle of reviewing to be, on the whole, defensible (as authors must generally be better informed on the subjects they write on than their self-constituted judges): nor can it be said that the spirit of the Edinburgh Review was in its early days as generous, or at any time as earnest, as could be wished: but, with all these drawbacks, it was of eminent service in opening a wide range of subjects to middle-class readers, and in advocating liberal political principles. Francis Jeffrey's articles were the gems of the publication—full, clear, sensible, here and there deep, and always elegant—they make one wonder why the fame of the Essayists of a century earlier should have so far transcended that of the best of our Edinburgh reviewers.—Of a later time is Macaulay, who began his striking series of review articles when Jeffrey was retiring amidst the well-earned honours of his old age. Rapid, brilliant, crowded with powers and with beauties, Mr. Macaulay's Essays have roused and animated and gratified the minds of a multitude of readers who would have required more than was reasonable if they had asked also for soundness of inference, completeness of statement, and repose of manner. Mr. Macaulay's influence as a historian is for a future generation to judge of; for his efforts in that direction have been entered upon since the close of our Thirty Years.—Another eminent Essayist is Walter Savage Landor: but his exquisite writings, full of thought, fresh and deep, and of feeling, sound and heroic, with the charm of antique learning spread over all, are the luxury of the few, and not even likely to leaven the mind of the many through those few.—Among the men of erudition who have made their generation the better for their learning, Mr. Hallam is prominent. His review of the Middle Ages, and his History of Literature, are among the benefits of the time; but his greatest gift is his Constitutional History, the value of which, with its singular impartiality and dispassionateness, may have been inestimable in a transitional political period.—One remains who must stand alone in our view, as he does in his life, and his modes of thought, and in the character of his writings. Whatever place we assign him, and by whatever name we call him, Thomas Carlyle appears to be the man who

T. MACAULAY.

LANDOR.

HALLAM.

CARLYLE.

1842—46. has most essentially modified the mind of his time. Nothing like his mind was ever heard or dreamed of in our literature before; nothing like his mournful, grotesque, and bitterly earnest writing ever seen. Yet his writings, though widely are not universally read: and he has long wrought where his works have never appeared, and his name been barely heard. His cry of sympathetic suffering has entered into the heart of legislators; his scornful rebuke of injustice has opened the eyes of the class-blinded: his bitter ridicule of cant and factitious emotion has confounded the sectarianism and fashionable humanity of the day; and his broad and bold and incessant implication of human equality in all essential matters (if the skin be but white) has roused the clergy, and other orders of guides and instructors, to a sense of the claims of their clients. If we find, as we certainly do every where in our land, a nobler moral ideal in society, a deeper sympathy, a stronger earnestness, and some partial deliverance from factitious and conventional morals and manners, it is unquestionably traceable to Carlyle. His mournful and protesting voice is heard sounding through our more serious parliamentary debates; and it is the glance of his eye that has directed other eyes to the depths of social misery and wrong. Whether we call him philosopher, poet, or moralist, he is the first teacher of our generation.

Maria Edgeworth. At the close of our period, Maria Edgeworth was living. She it was who early and effectually interested her century in the character and lot of the Irish: and she did much besides to raise the character of fiction, and to gratify the popular mind before Scott, and Bulwer, and Dickens, occupied that field of literature. It was as the friend of little children, however, that Miss Edgeworth is most beloved, and will be most gratefully remembered. Her delectable Rosamond is worth a score of famed novel-heroes, and is surely destined to everlasting youth, with an ingenuousness that can never be sullied, and a vivacity that can never be chilled.—Our restless and indefatigable Bulwer. Bulwer came next; and wherever English books are read his novels are found, and men and women are disputing whether they are harmless or much to be feared. His mind is evidently of so impressible and so eclectic a character as to prevent its productions having a vital influence; and therefore it seems as if they need not be feared; while there is great value in his wonderful analyses and specimens of the mind of the time;—the politic, the worldly, the sceptical, the artistical, the literary, the self-observant, the would-be philosophical;—nearly all, perhaps, but the simple, the religious, or the truly philosophical. Bulwer has given us popular dramas too; and successful political pamphlets, and volumes of poems, and essays. Succeeding more or less in every walk, his best achievement, as many good judges think, is in his early series of Essays republished under the title of 'The Student.' However opinions may vary about the claims of particular works, there can be no doubt that Bulwer has largely occupied the mind and leisure of the public of his day.—Last and greatest among the Novelists comes Charles Dickens. Dickens—the Boz, who rose up in the midst of us like a Jin with his magic glass among some eastern people, showing forth what was doing in the regions of darkness, and in odd places where nobody ever thought of going to look. It is scarcely conceivable that any one should, in our age of the world, exert a stronger social influence than Mr. Dickens has in his power. His sympathies are on the side of the suffering and the frail; and this makes him the idol of those who suffer, from whatever cause. We may wish that he had a sounder social philosophy, and that he could suggest a loftier moral to sufferers;—could lead them to see that "man does not live by bread alone," and that his best happiness lies in those parts of his nature which are only animated and exalted by suffering, if it does not proceed too far;—could show us something of the necessity and blessedness of homely and incessant self-discipline, and dwell a little less fondly on the grosser indulgences and commoner beneficence which are pleasant enough in their own place, but which can never make a man and society so happy as he desires them to become. We may wish for these things; and we may shrink from the exhibition of human miseries as an artistical study; but, these great drawbacks once admitted, we shall be eager to acknowledge that we have in Charles Dickens a man of a genius which cannot but mark the time, and accelerate or retard its tendencies. In as far as its tendencies are to "consider the poor," and to strip off the disguises of cant, he is vastly accelerating them. As to whether his delineations are true to broad daylight English life, that may be for some time to come a matter of opinion on which men will differ. That they are, one and all, true to the ideal in the author's mind, is a matter on which none differ; while the inexhaustible humour, the unbounded power of observation, the exquisite occasional pathos, and the geniality of spirit throughout, carry all readers far away from critical thoughts, and give to the author the whole range of influence, from the palace library to the penny book-club.

Punch.

It is something new in England to see a satirical periodical—a farcical exposure of the sins and follies of the time. We have one now. Some of the wits of London, with Douglas Jerrold at their head, set up a Weekly Commentary on the doings of London as seen by Punch: and there is no corner of the kingdom to which Punch's criticisms have not penetrated. The work has been very useful, as well as abundantly amusing; it has had its faults and follies, and has dropped some of them; and now, its objects of satire are usually as legitimate as its satire is pungent and well-tempered. It is something that the grave English have a droll periodical to make them laugh every week; and it is something more that the laugh is not at the expense of wisdom.

Herschel.

In the solemn and immortal labours of the Laboratory and the Observatory we have Faraday and Herschel yet busy. It is not for us to speak of the secrets of Nature which they are laying open; and it is not for any one to compute what they have done, or to anticipate what they may do. Of one work of Sir J. Herschel's we may form some estimate—his 'Preliminary Discourse on Natural Philosophy.' That treatise is enough to make any man with a mind and heart long to devote himself to the pursuit of Physical Science, as the high road to wisdom, from that moment onwards. His own devotion to it is an example and inducement to all who can follow. He went to the Cape, to set up his observatory—leaving behind all considerations but that of the advancement of science: and every step of his pilgrimage has set its mark on a future age.—As for Faraday, we dare say only that he is penetrating into mysteries of existence of which his own vast faculties can hardly

Faraday.

1842—46. bear the contemplation, and which will therefore become fully comprehensible only to a future generation. Under his gaze and his touch, the solid material of the universe is all melting away—matter (according to the old and now vulgar idea of it) is dissolving itself into forces; and our feeble insight into nature would be blinded, and our weak grasp of reliance would be all cast loose, but for the great truth which presents itself more clearly through all changes—that immutable Law rules every where, all-sufficing for our intellectual support and our ease of heart. If we cannot compute what has been done by the researches and discoveries of Faraday for the period through which we have passed, we can say nothing of how they will influence the next. We can only feel certain that, in as far as they must change the aspect of the universe, and give a new command over the conditions of organized life, they must largely affect the destiny of man, both in his intellectual progress and his social relations. It will be for the men of that future time to assign to Faraday his place in the history of his country and of his kind.

CHAPTER XVII.

1815—46.

National Advancement.

In taking a review of any period within our own experience, every one of us is apt to exaggerate the gains of the time—its gains in knowledge, arts, and moral views. This arises in part from our confounding change or expansion in our own ideas with change in the world about us. Therefore, we are liable to be struck by an opposite view upon occasion; and, in contemplating the best things in the old world—not its arts and science, but the wisdom of its sages, and the mental condition and communion of its people—to doubt whether, after all, the human race has got on so very much as is commonly said. If we endeavour to keep our view extended, we shall not suppose that any critical or decisive advance can have been made by any section of the human race in a period of thirty years: and we shall look without pride or vanity, it may be hoped, upon such improvements as may be recognised; while the review of such improvements may be thoroughly delightful as convincing us of that rapid partial advance towards the grand slow general advance which we humbly but firmly trust to be the destination of the human race.

Electric Telegraph.

Sun-Painting.

Lord Rosse's Telescope.

To look first to the lowest class of improvements—the Arts of Life: we find many of recent origin, which promote the general convenience and comfort. The Electric Telegraph is a marvel of the time which our minds are even yet hardly able to familiarize themselves with: and yet, while amazed at what we see, we have a clear persuasion that this is but the opening of a series of discoveries and inventions. News is transmitted as by a lightning flash; messages are exchanged, police and soldiery may be summoned on an emergency, criminals are captured, scientific observations at distant points may become all but simultaneous, and there is a strengthening expectation that distant countries may communicate, not by the sea, slowly and hazardously, as hitherto, but through the sea, with the rapidity of thought. And still, when we look at the natural facts that have manifested themselves in the course of recent experiments, we are aware that much more remains to be revealed.—Then, again, we have discovered the wonderful fact of sun-painting. Not only are our portraits taken (with a harshness at present which will soon, no doubt, be softened down by art)—portraits about whose likeness there can be no dispute—but a world of toil and error is certain to be saved in coast-surveying, architectural portraiture, and delineation in natural history. Every fibre of a flower, every stone of a building, every feature of any scene, is fixed in a moment in its true proportions, to last for ever. There need no more be controversy in future centuries about the aspects of perished cities, or speculation about the faces of the illustrious dead. Each age may leave to the future a picture gallery of its whole outer life.—Then, again, there is a telescope existing, of such power, that every rock in our side of the moon, as large as

1815—46.

GUN COTTON.

THE THAMES TUNNEL.

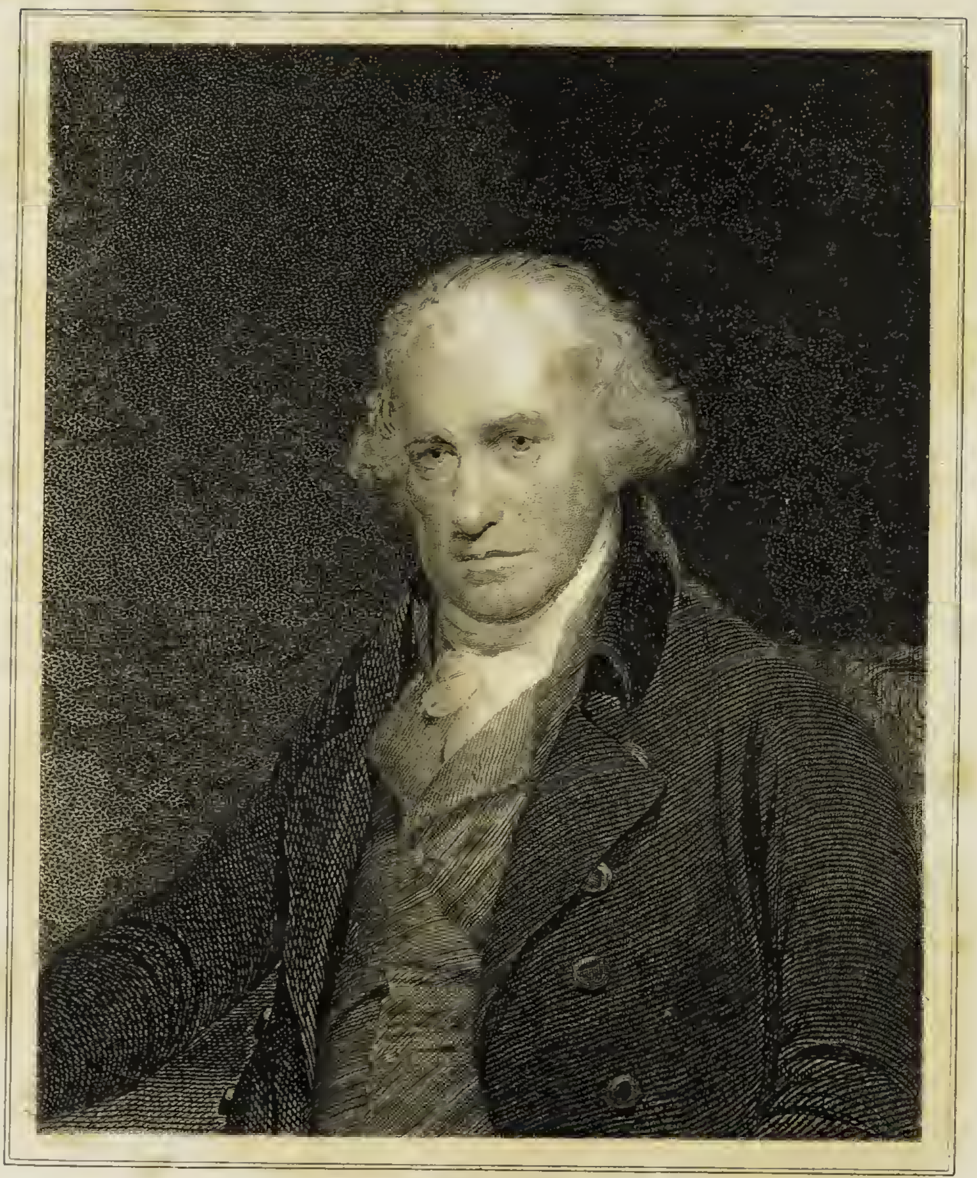
Annual Register, 1841: Chron. 123.

Annual Register, 1843: Chron. 30.

a church, is visible. We do not hear much of this marvel yet, because it is not yet so manageable as it will be; and errors derived from its use are as enormous as its powers. But it is a vast new opening into science, through which wise men are learning to look, and which may hereafter stand wide to the peasant and the child.—Of steam and railways enough has been said. Every body knows more than could be told here of what they do in superseding toil, in setting human hands free for skilled labour, in bringing men face to face with each other and with nature and novelty;—the peer face to face with the farmer and the merchant, and the mechanic face to face with mountain and forest and sea.—Then again, we have new explosive substances which first connect themselves in our thoughts with war—as the Gun Cotton of recent invention, but which will doubtless be used to lay open secrets of nature, and help us in our application of the arts when the nations shall not learn war any more.—In an humbler way, but by no means a contemptible one, we have now means of obtaining fire in a moment, every where. Not only in the cottage but in every house the tiresome tinder-box, with its slowness and uncertainty, was the only way to get fire twenty years ago, except in the chemist's laboratory, where phosphorus matches were a sort of terror to the commonalty. Now the penny box of lucifers is in every cottage, where it saves the burning of the rushlight for the baby's sake. We have had some rick and shed burning in consequence; but that evil was sure to follow any great facility in obtaining fire.—In waterproof clothing, the poor have obtained a great benefit. Large classes of labourers may soon be better protected from wet at their out-door work than are the policemen of the present day.—The Thames Tunnel may at first appear purely a work of human head and hands; a piece of boring and building: but it could not have been achieved in an age of science inferior to our own. Mention has been made before of the strong and wide interest which existed about this work when it was brought to a stop, and shut up for some years. The sanguine were justified in their prophecies that it would be opened again. In December, 1841, the works reached the shaft at Wapping: and on the 24th, an opening was made in the brickwork of the shaft; and a large party of gentlemen—all the Directors and several original subscribers—walked through, being the first persons who had ever passed under the river from shore to shore. In March, 1843, it was opened to foot passengers, a grand procession with music passing through one side and returning by the other. While this modern mermaid music was going on lower than the fishes could dive, there was some grief and mourning above—such as always makes the drawback on new appliances of civilization. A black flag was hung out at the Tunnel pier, to show the displeasure of the watermen at such a supersession of their Redriffe ferry. In the next July, the Queen and Prince Albert went to see the Tunnel: and in the following March, at the end of the first year, upwards of 2,000,000 of foot passengers had paid toll. To this day, it is the first object of curiosity to foreigners visiting London.

BRITISH SCIENTIFIC ASSOCIATION.

It must be in another kind of history than this, that the progress of Science during the last thirty years should be recorded. Here, we can only point out the great apparatus provided for that end in the British Association for the Advancement of Science. This Association has continued to hold its meetings



Engraved by C. E. Wagstaff

JAMES WATT.

From a Picture by Sir W. Beechey
in the possession of J. Watt Esq. of Aston Hall

London, Published by Charles Knight, 22 Ludgate Street

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from year to year; and, admitting all that has been said, and all that can be said, of its drawbacks—of the waste of time by the talking of egotists, and the levity and vanity of many who congregate there for excitement or display—there remains a large amount of practical service to human interests. There are men watching the tides on the shores of all seas; and we are likely to know in time the levels of all the waters of the globe. Observatories—Russian, French, American, British, and others—are set up in every zone. One man comes with proof in his hand of the existence of an unseen heavenly body, which others begin to look for; and something, whether it or another, is found. Others come from searching in the opposite direction, and bring up almost incredible knowledge from the bowels of the earth. The most obvious result, perhaps, to common eyes, of these scientific gatherings is the wide spread of geological knowledge; or, at least, of ideas related to such knowledge. It is a good thing that men should have some notion of the structure of the globe: it is better that their minds should open to the conception of vast spaces of time, and of huge revolutions of nature; and of that order of appearance of all living things which is so unlike previous conception: but it must surely be a nobler thing still that men should learn the relation they bear to their place of abode; should get to know how the human mind and life take their character from the geological formation of the region they dwell in. If they perceive how the dwellers in the desert must necessarily be one sort of men, and the dwellers in pasture lands another; how thoughts and desires and ways, and therefore physical structure itself, are modified by men living in a mineral, or a pastoral, or an agricultural district, they have obtained a grasp of some of the grandest conditions of human life, from which must arise, in time, some determining power over the human lot. It is not to be wondered at, considering how the Science of Geology interests at once the reasoning and the observing faculties, the imagination (both antiquarian and speculative) and the humanity which dwells more or less in every one, that its spread among the people should be one of the most noticeable facts of our time. GEOLOGY.

MEDICINE. Then, there is some advance made towards a real science of Medicine. It cannot be said that we have yet any science of medicine, properly so called: and the ablest physicians are the most ready and anxious to make the declaration. But there are, or seem to be, now clear openings to a knowledge of the nature of disease, and not only to that of symptoms of disease. As a philosopher of our day is wont to say, we are now presented, as it were, with the fragmentary parts of some great general law of the human frame, which we seem to be on the verge of discovering. Since the peace, the physicians of Europe have communicated more freely than before; though still, the spirit of the profession hinders their communicating enough, or in the best manner. The hitherto universal empirical method of producing by drugs and otherwise one set of symptoms of disease to drive out another, has already given way, in many directions, to the trial of more natural methods, based on new observations. Dr. Hahnemann's opposite method, based on a theory yet dim and imperfect, but more philosophical on the face of it, prevails widely in schools of medicine abroad, and in private practice in England, so as to have remarkably diminished the application of drugs, and the creation of artificial

1815—46. ailments. The Water System, with all its abuse and extravagance, has been useful in putting a check upon the worse empiricism which preceded it; and we have considerably advanced in our insight into some prodigious mysteries of the human frame, which rebuke alike the levity of ignorance and the solemnity of professional dogmatism. Our knowledge is as yet little enough; but it is more than it was; and one consequence of the research, and of improved intercourse with the Continent—a consequence open to universal observation—is that physicians give fewer and fewer drugs, and admit more and more freely that a scientific basis for their profession remains to be found. —As might be expected, the knowledge of anatomy and physiology, and the art of surgery, have advanced at a far more rapid rate; and in this way the chances of alleviation of human suffering are improving every day.

Sanitary Improvement.

And here we slide into the department of social interests. The attention given to Sanitary improvement is a leading feature of our time. Thirty years ago, scarcely anybody thought of pure air, good drainage, a sufficient supply of water, or even cleanliness of person, as we all think of them now. In the greatest houses, there was little or no thought about what kind of soil the house was built on, or where the drains emptied themselves, or where the used-up air of the apartments went to, or, perhaps, of the necessity of thorough daily ablution: yet now these things are coming into consideration on behalf of the very poorest. There was, thirty years ago, more spirit-and-water drinking among the middle classes, more tight-lacing among women, more physicking of children, more close rooms, a more imperfect washing of clothes, less exercise and cold water in general use, less horror at close alleys, and large cities without airing grounds. Now we have People's Parks, here and there; we have Baths and Washhouses for the poor—and not as charity, but as a purchaseable convenience for those who live in small houses or few rooms. We have not yet achieved the wholesome and profitable drainage of towns, and ventilation of the houses therein, and the abolition of burial of the dead among the homes of the living; but we have a firm hold of the idea and the purpose; and the great work is therefore sure to be done. Among many

Dr. Andrew Combe.

benefactors in this direction, we must mention first Dr. Andrew Combe, the kindly Edinburgh physician, who turned his own loss of health to the purpose of improving the health of others. He made himself a subject of cool philosophical observation, and gave us the benefit, in some popular works on physiological subjects which have diffused a useful knowledge of the conditions of health, and a wholesome observance of them, wherever they have spread—that is, almost all over Great Britain and the United States; and probably much further. In these works, whose views are to a great degree the reflection of the sufferings of the author, there is no trace of egotism, or of any thing else that is morbid. Dr. Combe unconsciously gives us in them a moral

Mr. Chadwick.

instruction not less valuable than the sanitary.—Mr. Chadwick has no doubt done more than any one other man in direct furtherance of the general health. He has looked at the subject on every side, and exhibited it in every light. He has insisted, not only on the cruelty of condemning a multitude of our citizens to disease and premature death, but on the sin of encouraging crime by discomfort, and the folly of expending more money on the burial of the dead, and the support of the widows and orphans that they leave, than would keep the community in health. Mr. Chadwick's connexion with the first Commission of the New Poor Law afforded him opportunity for obtaining an extraordinary amount of information on sanitary subjects; and he has so strenuously worked the enterprise of reform, that its completion is, amidst many discouragements and difficulties, natural in such a case, merely a question of time. Before the history of another period shall be written by some one of the next generation, we may hope that the Thames will have ceased to receive the filth of London and of other towns; that the sewers will answer their proper purpose; that every house will be supplied with pure water; that the dead will be buried in country cemeteries; that every stagnant ditch and dunghill will be treated as a public offence; and that the causes of fever will be destroyed wherever it is possible to detect them.

AGRICULTURAL ASSOCIATIONS.

The pursuit of this inquiry has cut out work for the Agricultural Associations of the kingdom. It is now known that the proper application of the filth that destroys life by fever, would support, in the form of wholesome food, a vastly increased amount of human life. The science of agricultural chemistry has advanced materially within thirty years—partly in consequence of our improved intercourse with the Continent. And our agricultural associations have sprung up within a much shorter date. The Board of Agriculture, the pet project of George III., was supported by an annual parliamentary grant. It had no real life in it; and it expired when the parliamentary grant was withdrawn in 1817. After that, we had in England nothing corresponding to the great and useful Highland Society of Scotland. Scotch farming improved continually. In England, farming could hardly grow worse than it had been; but it did not improve. Mr. William Shaw understood something of the magnitude of the need. In 1834, and subsequent years, he urged continually, in agricultural periodicals, the formation of a national Society for the advancement of practical agriculture. At the dinner of the Smithfield Club, on the 11th of December, 1837, Lord Spencer proposed the formation of such a society; and the thing was done. From the knowledge since obtained, and the results already exhibited, it appears that if we understood our position and our business, there need be no more fear of an insufficiency of work or of food for the people. If all refuse were used as manure, and all the land now under cultivation were properly tilled, we should hear no more in our time of surplus population, of wages falling below 8*s.*, of farmers having cause to dread the importation of foreign wheat, or of the consumption of meat being confined to classes who by no means want it most. As the development of Manufactures was the grand economical feature of the last century, that of Agriculture appears likely to become the distinctive feature of the present. The pernicious spell of Protection is dissolved; something like a scientific education is now to be obtained by the next generation of farmers; and our sanitary researches are about to provide an ample supply of the first requisite of increased production. We may hope soon to see the agricultural population once more gaining upon the manufacturing, and the rural labouring class ceasing to be the opprobrium of our polity.—We have shown that the preservation of Game is giving way, and must give way still further.—We are in course of improvement with regard to our Prison management. There is nothing to boast about yet, when we look at our convicts as victims of moral

GAME LAWS.

PRISON MANAGEMENT.

disease induced by ignorance and social neglect; but there is no comparison between the state of our prisons now and thirty years since. Since that time Mrs. Fry and her coadjutors have done their benevolent work; and it has been followed up by government and local authorities to such a point as to leave no doubt of a thorough reform in time. The main existing difficulty arises from the want of an ascertained basis of action. We have not settled yet what to do with our convicts. There is a clear expectation everywhere that the punishment of death will soon be abolished. There is, at the same time, almost universal discontent with our transportation system; and the widest diversity of views as to how convicts are to be managed and disposed of. It is not for us to prophecy what the result will be. It is enough to record that the question is before the national mind. It is enough that justice and mercy are invoked: for there never yet was any difficulty which, once appealed to, they refused to solve.

Extinction of Slavery.

We have seen how essentially our Criminal Law has been improved since the days when Romilly laboured on amidst discouragement of every kind. We have seen how our nation has been relieved from the disgrace of Slaveholding. We have failed in our efforts to stop the slave trade; and we appear slow to learn that the slave trade can come to an end only by being superseded, and not by being checked by force of arms. By encouraging the production of cotton, sugar, and coffee by free labour, by fostering innocent commerce in Africa, and, not least, by sympathizing with the peaceful efforts of abolitionists wherever they are striving against the curse of slavery, we can do more for the extinction of the hellish traffic than by any armed force that can be sent out upon the sea. As the nation first in economic rank among the peoples of the world, it seems as if it must be our business to put down slavery by exhibiting its inferiority to free labour, while not the less insisting on its moral odiousness.

Education.

We have witnessed the rise and progress of Mechanics' Institutes. We have seen a small beginning made of a State Education of children. A very small beginning it is — the whole sum of Parliamentary grants not yet reaching half a million. There has been a great amount of virtuous voluntary effort, among Churchmen, Dissenters, Chartists, employers of labour, and a multitude who were ready to aid: but there are bounds to the ability of individuals; and it cannot, in the nature of things, go on expanding in proportion to the ever-growing need. Again, the quality of the education given by private efforts is a very uncertain matter. It can rarely be so good as that which is planned from the united wisdom of a people: and it is apt to be of a very low order. The sectarian spirit which is the curse of English society has thus far condemned the children of the nation to a defective education, or to total ignorance. While in no department of benevolent action has there been more energy and good-will than in extending Education, in none are we more behind the needs of the time. We shall not be safe, morally, politically, or economically, till we join in agreeing that, as each church cannot have its own way, nor any one, even though it be the Established Church, we must meet the evil of ignorance in the largest class of the people by throwing open to all means of sound moral and intellectual education, leaving the religious instruction and training to the pastors or guardians of the pupils. In indirect ways, meanwhile, the Education of the people has been going on. We have seen that much was done for the intellects of large numbers by the action of the Anti-Corn-law League. Much, again, has been done by the vast spread of cheap literature, inducing, among other benefits, the formation of penny-a-week book-clubs. And then there is that animating feature of the time, the introduction of Music as a popular pursuit. For this, we are obviously indebted to the Peace. It is from Germany that this remarkable benefit has come. In 1842, we find the first performance of Mr. Hullah's musical classes to have taken place, in the presence of Prince Albert, in Exeter Hall. The classes were formed under the sanction of the government Council of Education. Here, on the very first public trial, 1500 novices sang, without the guidance of any instrument, psalms, hymns, and a madrigal, in a manner which made some hearers look upon Mr. Hullah as a sort of magician, who could convert a crowd of untuned English adults, hitherto almost unconscious what music was, into a vast organ endowed with soul. Since that date, music has been a beloved and joyful pursuit in many a little back-parlour in Whitechapel and the suburbs of London, in many a workshop in provincial towns, and at evening gatherings in remote villages where some pupil of Hullah or Mainzer may have settled. There is now glee-singing to be heard among apprentices in north country villages which could hardly have been surpassed, a quarter of a century ago, in our cathedral towns.—In another branch of art, how has the popular taste been improved by the immigration of foreigners! Before 1815, our artisan classes saw an exhibition of wax-work occasionally, and could buy for their mantel-shelf blue and green plaster parrots, and brown and white plaster cats. Now, we find in cottages the Princess Marie's Joan of Arc, and Canova's groups, or our own Shakspere and Milton—cheap and somewhat coarse, but better than parrots and cats. It is surprising now to go into remote corners of the country, where Italian boys have not penetrated, and see there what ornaments our people admired before the peace. This is a benefit not confined to large towns. In large towns we find something more. We find Museums and galleries of Art, and exhibitions of manufactures opened to the multitude. The British Museum admits, on Easter Monday, more than the total population of a provincial city: and there are hundreds of artisans in London who can now tell their brother workmen about the gods and heroes of Egyptian temples and tombs, and the monuments of Assyrian monarchs mentioned in the Bible.

Popular Music.

Annual Register, 1842: Chron. 71.

Popular Art.

Amidst these processes of virtual education, we find the function of the Educator somewhat more respected than it used to be. There are still suburban villages where the inhabitants are too genteel to admit persons engaged in education to their book-clubs: but this is laughed at by the wiser majority of the middle class. Some of the efforts to exalt the position of the Educator have been fantastic enough, and unsuccessful accordingly: for it is a thing which cannot be arbitrarily done. When education is duly improved, the Educator will be duly honoured; and not till then: and for the sound reason that not till then will the Educator be worthy of his pretensions. Meantime, the tutor and the governess are more humanely considered than they used to be, in regard to their sufferings and their needs, and more sure of appreciation

The Educator.

1815—46. when they merit it. The main evil still is in the middle class poverty which makes tutors and governesses of many hundreds who would fain obtain their bread in some other way, and who are thus not in a position to require more than a mere rescue from present poverty. Associations for the relief and care of governesses are benevolent in aim, and afford subsistence and solace to the worn-out and helpless to a certain extent: but it is obvious that this is not an agency which can elevate a class, or modify an institution. If governesses are to rise to honour and independence, it must be by their being educated to sustain an honourable and indispensable function. They must have professional requisites to obtain professional dues. Hitherto, their position has been partly one of service, partly a professional one, without express training for either.

Methods of Charity.

There can be no question of our methods of charity having improved since the publication of the Reports on which the reform of the Poor Law was founded. There was always plenty of alms-giving;—proneness enough to relieve the misery which met the eye. Now, there is more searching into the causes of misery, and a more widely spread knowledge that social misery cannot be cured, but is usually aggravated, by alms-giving.—The remaining grand feature of a renewed social temper is the spread of a spirit of peace—of a disinclination, that is, for brute violence. The diminution of the practice of Duelling is remarkable. In 1843, after the public had been shocked by the occurrence of a fatal duel which in former times would have merely furnished forth the gossip of the day, an association was formed which would not in old times have been dreamed of;—an Anti-duelling Association, consisting of 326 members, so many of whom were of the two services, or noblemen, baronets, and members of parliament, that they fairly conceived themselves strong enough in their union to lead public opinion in the matter of personal honour. Their first act was to denounce duelling, as contrary to the laws of God and man, and eminently irrational as well as sinful, and to pledge themselves to discountenance by influence and example the practice which they condemned.—In the next year, some amended articles relating to duelling were issued from the War Office, by order of the Queen; and in these articles duelling was prohibited, on the representation that honourable men are ready to apologize for offence given in mistake or haste; and that a reference to friends, or, if that will not do, to the commanding officer on the spot, ought to suffice for all purposes of personal justification. There were exhortations and provisions in regard to the seconds, and an assertion of true principles of honour in words of the Duke of Wellington's of old date. It was not to be supposed that a practice so grounded in self-regards as that of duelling could be put an end to by an ordinance like this: but it was a useful declaration at a particular juncture; and there can be no doubt of the great abatement of the barbarous practice during the last years of this period.

Duelling.

Annual Register, 1842: Chron. 61.

Finally, if we review for a moment the political morality of the period, we shall see, not only an improvement, but an essential change. The old Toryism is gone. We never hear of it now, even from the most antique members of the House of Peers. Our present Conservatism may admit under its term much that is selfish, corrupt, and requiring strenuous opposition: but its idea is indispensable under a representative system; and its requisitions are not at present offensive; or, it may be, they are not strongly enough urged to be injurious to the public welfare. The doctrines of Bentham, so much discussed in the early part of the century, and now so seldom heard of, were operative to the extent in which they were wanted. In as far as they were shallow, pedantic, and inadequate to the mind of Man, and the needs of a State, they are forgotten:—in as far as they are rational, and benevolent, and genial, they still work. "The greatest happiness of the greatest number" is not now talked of as the profession of a school: but the idea is in the mind of politicians, and shapes their aims. The truest welfare of the largest classes has been the plea for much of our legislation; and especially for the whole grand achievement of the completion of free trade. No statesman would now dream of conducting the government on any other avowed principle than consulting the welfare of the greatest number in preference to that of any smaller class. Another remarkable advance, which needs only to be indicated, is that in the direction of Religious Liberty. The emancipation of the Catholics might still be regarded as an act of mere pressing necessity: but the preponderance of opinion in favour of religious liberty—a preponderance in every political party, and in a case where there was nothing but the principle at stake—on the occasion, that is, of the Dissenters' Chapels Bill—showed a prodigious advance since the time when the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts was refused, with levity, or with silly solemnity, from session to session. The spirit of religious liberty may now be considered to dwell in every man among us worthy to be called a statesman.

RELIGIOUS LIBERTY.

WHAT REMAINS.

THE LABOUR QUESTION.

While all this is done—so much progress achieved that appears to be incontrovertible—what remains to be done?—Something greater than all that has been achieved. The tremendous Labour Question remains absolutely untouched—the question whether the toil of a life is not to provide a sufficiency of bread. No thoughtful man can for a moment suppose that this question can be put aside. No man with a head and a heart can suppose that any considerable class of a nation will submit for ever to toil incessantly for bare necessaries—without comfort, ease, or luxury, now—without prospect for their children, and without a hope for their own old age. A social idea or system which compels such a state of things as this must be, in so far, worn out. In ours, it is clear that some renovation is wanted, and must be found. We see celibacy so extending in our middle class as that hardly half of them marry before they are elderly, while the poor and pauper class marry as before, and thus provide for a vast preponderance of the democratic element in our society in the course of another generation. And this is a serious matter for the statesman to ponder. It arises from a diminution of means in the middle class, and the recklessness of poverty in the very lowest. Such is its origin: but what will be its issue? While the statesman is pondering this, the moralist will mourn over the vice which is the inevitable consequence of the restriction of marriage in the middle class. And what can the moralist say to the extraordinary increase of the crime of domestic poisoning among our poor? That a mother should, unconscious of wrong, have poisoned eight infants in succession by putting arsenic on her breasts, is a fact which (strengthened by the occurrence of similar deeds about the same time) makes us fancy we are dreaming about living in an age of improved civilization and humanity.

1815—46. If it be true, as some of us say, that the labourer's life-long toil demands a return, not only of sufficient food, and a domestic shelter for his old age, but of intellectual and spiritual culture, what can we say to the intellectual and spiritual state of the lower portion of our working classes? How much is there of the intellectual pride of ignorance and misinformation, and of that worst infidelity which grows out of a sense of injustice! If we hear complaints of the irreligion of the poor, and of the growth of that irreligion, we ought to put ourselves in their place, and observe how the religion of the rich must appear to them there: and then we shall understand how suspicious they must be of promises of unseen and future good when it is offered as better than the substantial good which they see others enjoying, and feel to be their due. When a man sees his children sinking in body for want of food, and in mind for want of instruction, can he be content with the prospect held out by the well-fed and learned of a happiness which he cannot now understand, and is not sure that he could ever enjoy? Men so placed are like children. They must have justice before they can humbly and magnanimously forego justice. Before they can enter into a state of religious contentment, they must see why they should be content; and they ought to decline being content before they see reason for it. Thus it is that, in spite of church-building, and missionary effort, and extensive charity, there is so much proud and hard irreligion among the poor of our nation. If it be said that they are improvident, and that a multitude who are in poverty need not be so, the answer again is plain. They know no better; and that they know no better is caused by social neglect. They are not comfortable: they feel that while they work, they ought to be comfortable; and they will not acquiesce while they see that those who work less are more comfortable, and they are not told why. This is what remains for us to do;—to find out the why, and to make everybody understand it.

The material for working out a better state is before us; and the question of the Rights of Labour is pressing upon us. We have science brightening around us, which may teach us to increase indefinitely our supply of food. We have labourers everywhere who are as capable as any men above them of domestic solicitude, and who will not be more reckless about a provision for their families than gentlemen are, when once the natural affections of the citizen-parent are allowed free scope. We have now (by the recent repeal of the remnant of the Navigation laws) complete liberty of commerce. We have now the best heads and hearts occupied about this great question of the Rights of Labour, with impressive warnings presented to us from abroad, that it cannot be neglected under a lighter penalty than ruin to all. Is it possible that the solution should not be found? This solution may probably be the central fact of the next period of British history; and then, better than now, it may be seen that in preparation for it lies the chief interest of the preceding Thirty Years' Peace.

THE END.

CABINET MINISTERS.*	1814.	1815.	1816.	1817.
First Lord of the Treasury	Earl of Liverpool	....	....	....
Lord President of the Council	Earl of Harrowby	....	....	....
Lord High Chancellor	Lord Eldon	....	....	....
Lord Privy Seal	Earl of Westmoreland	....	....	....
Chancellor of the Exchequer	Nicholas Vansittart	....	....	....
First Lord of the Admiralty	Viscount Melville	....	....	....
Master General of the Ordnance	Earl Mulgrave	....	....	....
Secretary of State—Home Department	Viscount Sidmouth	....	....	....
,, ,, Foreign Affairs	Viscount Castlereagh	....	....	....
,, ,, War and Colonies	Earl Bathurst	....	....	....
President of Board of Control	Earl of Buckinghamshire	....	George Canning	....
Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster	C. Bragge Bathurst	....	....	....
Master of the Mint	W. W. Pole	....	....	....

CABINET MINISTERS.	1818.	1819.	1820—April.	1821.
First Lord of the Treasury	Earl of Liverpool	....	....	....
Lord President of the Council	Earl of Harrowby	....	....	....
Lord High Chancellor	Lord Eldon	....	....	....
Lord Privy Seal	Earl of Westmoreland	....	....	....
Chancellor of the Exchequer	Nicholas Vansittart	....	....	....
First Lord of the Admiralty	Viscount Melville	....	....	....
Master General of the Ordnance	Earl Mulgrave	....	Duke of Wellington	....
Secretary of State—Home Department	Viscount Sidmouth	....	....	....
,, ,, Foreign Affairs	Viscount Castlereagh	....	....	Marquess of Londonderry.†
,, ,, War and Colonies	Earl Bathurst	....	....	....
President of Board of Control	George Canning	....	....	C. Bragge Bathurst.
Chancellor of Duchy of Lancaster	C. Bragge Bathurst	....	....	....
Master of the Mint	W. W. Pole	....	....	Lord Maryborough.
Treasurer of Navy and President of Board of Trade	Frederick John Robinson.	....	....	....
			Earl of Mulgrave *(without office).*	

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* The Lists generally show the composition of the Cabinet at the opening of the Parliamentary Session, but not always, especially in the cases of individual changes. Where the columns are blank it is to be understood that there have been no changes.

† This is merely a change of title, consequent on the death of Lord Castlereagh's father.

CABINET MINISTERS.	1822.	1823.	1824.	1825.
First Lord of the Treasury	Earl of Liverpool	....	....	....
Lord President of the Council	Earl of Harrowby	....	....	....
Lord High Chancellor	Earl of Eldon	....	....	....
Lord Privy Seal	Earl of Westmoreland	....	....	....
Chancellor of the Exchequer	Nicholas Vansittart	Frederick J. Robinson	....	....
First Lord of the Admiralty	Viscount Melville	....	....	....
Master General of the Ordnance	Duke of Wellington	....	....	....
Secretary of State—Home Department	Robert Peel	....	....	....
,, ,, Foreign Affairs	Marquess of Londonderry	George Canning	....	....
,, ,, War and Colonies	Earl Bathurst	....	....	....
President of Board of Control	C. W. W. Wynne	....	....	....
Chancellor of Duchy of Lancaster	C. Bathurst	Lord Bexley	....	....
Master of the Mint	Lord Maryborough	....	....	....
Treasurer of Navy and President of Board of Trade	Frederick J. Robinson	....	....	.... W. Huskisson.
	Viscount Sidmouth	....	....	....

CABINET MINISTERS.	1826.	1827—January.	1827—May.	1827—October.
First Lord of the Treasury	Earl of Liverpool	....	G. Canning	Lord Goderich.
Lord President of the Council	Earl of Harrowby	....	....	Duke of Portland.
Lord High Chancellor	Earl of Eldon	....	Lord Lyndhurst	....
Lord Privy Seal	Earl of Westmoreland	....	Duke of Portland	Earl of Carlisle.
Chancellor of the Exchequer	Frederick J. Robinson	....	G. Canning	J. Herries.
First Lord of the Admiralty	Viscount Melville	....	....	....
Master General of the Ordnance	Duke of Wellington	....	....	Marquess of Anglesea.
Secretary of State—Home Department	Robert Peel	....	W. S. Bourne	Marquess of Lansdowne.
,, ,, Foreign Affairs	George Canning	....	Viscount Dudley	....
,, ,, War and Colonies	Earl Bathurst	....	Viscount Goderich	W. Huskisson.
President of Board of Control	C. W. W. Wynne	....	....	....
Chancellor of Duchy of Lancaster	Lord Bexley	....	....	....
Master of the Mint	....	....	....	G. Tierney.
Treasurer of the Navy	W. Huskisson	....	....	C. Grant.
President of Board of Trade	W. Huskisson	....	....	C. Grant.
First Commissioner of Land Revenue	Viscount Sidmouth	....	....	....
Secretary at War	....	....	Viscount Palmerston	....
Surveyor of Woods and Forests	....	....	....	W. S. Bourne.

CABINET MINISTERS.	1828.	1829.	1830.	1831.
First Lord of the Treasury	Viscount Goderich	Duke of Wellington	....	Earl Grey.
Lord President of the Council	Duke of Portland	Earl Bathurst	....	Marquess of Lansdowne.
Lord High Chancellor	Lord Lyndhurst	....	....	Lord Brougham.
Lord Privy Seal	Earl of Carlisle	Earl of Rosslyn	....	Lord Durham.
Chancellor of the Exchequer	J. C. Herries	H. Goulburn	....	Viscount Althorp.
First Lord of the Admiralty	....	Viscount Melville	....	Sir J. Graham.
Master General of the Ordnance	....	....	....	....
Secretary of State—Home Department	Marquess of Lansdowne	R. Peel	....	Viscount Melbourne.
,, ,, Foreign Affairs	Earl Dudley	Earl of Aberdeen	....	Viscount Palmerston.
,, ,, War and Colonies	W. Huskisson	Sir G. Murray	....	Viscount Goderich.
President of Board of Control	....	Lord Ellenborough	....	C. Grant.
Chancellor of Duchy of Lancaster	....	....	....	Lord Holland.
Master of the Mint	G. Tierney	J. C. Herries	....	Lord Auckland.
Treasurer of Navy	C. Grant	W. Fitzgerald	....	....
President of Board of Trade	....	....	....	....
First Commissioner of Land Revenue	W. S. Bourne	....	....	....
Secretary at War	Viscount Palmerston	....	....	....
Postmaster General	....	....	....	Duke of Richmond.
Paymaster of the Forces	....	....	....	Lord John Russell.
Chief Secretary for Ireland	....	....	....	E. G. S. Stanley.
				Earl of Carlisle.

CABINET MINISTERS.	1832.	1833.	1834—January.	1834—August.
First Lord of the Treasury	Earl Grey	....	....	Viscount Melbourne.
Lord President of the Council	Marquess of Lansdowne	....	....	....
Lord High Chancellor	Lord Brougham	....	....	....
Lord Privy Seal	Lord Durham	Earl of Ripon	....	Earl of Mulgrave.
Chancellor of the Exchequer	Viscount Althorp	....	....	....
First Lord of the Admiralty	Sir J. Graham	....	....	Lord Auckland.
Master General of the Ordnance	....	....	....	....
Secretary of State—Home Department	Viscount Melbourne	....	....	Viscount Duncannon.
,, ,, Foreign Affairs	Viscount Palmerston	....	....	....
,, ,, War and Colonies	Viscount Goderich	E. G. S. Stanley	....	S. Rice.
President of Board of Control	C. Grant	....	....	....
Chancellor of Duchy of Lancaster	Lord Holland	....	....	....
Master of the Mint	Lord Auckland	....	....	....
Treasurer of the Navy, and President of the Board of Trade	....	....	....	....
Postmaster General	Duke of Richmond	....	....	Marquess of Conyngham.
Paymaster of the Forces	Lord J. Russell	....	....	....
Chief Secretary for Ireland	E. G. S. Stanley	....	....	E. J. Littleton.
	Earl of Carlisle	....	....	

CABINET MINISTERS.	1834—December.	1835—January.	1835—April.	1836.
First Lord of the Treasury	Sir R. Peel	....	Viscount Melbourne	....
Lord President of the Council	Earl of Rosslyn	....	Marquess of Lansdowne	....
Lord High Chancellor	Lord Lyndhurst	....	In Commission	Lord Cottenham.
Lord Privy Seal	Lord Wharncliffe	....	Viscount Duncannon	....
Chancellor of the Exchequer	Sir R. Peel	....	T. S. Rice	....
First Lord of the Admiralty	Earl de Grey	....	Earl of Minto	....
Master General of the Ordnance	Sir G. Murray	....	....	....
Secretary of State—Home Department	H. Goulburn	....	Lord J. Russell	....
,, ,, Foreign Affairs	Duke of Wellington	....	Viscount Palmerston	....
,, ,, War and Colonies	Earl of Aberdeen	....	Lord Glenelg	....
President of Board of Control	Lord Ellenborough	....	Sir J. C. Hobhouse	....
Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster	....	....	Lord Holland	....
Master of the Mint	A. Baring	....	....	....
Treasurer of the Navy and President of the Board of Trade	....	....	C. P. Thomson	....
Postmaster General	....	....	....	....
Paymaster of the Forces	Sir E. Knatchbull	....	....	....
Chief Secretary for Ireland	Sir H. Hardinge	....	....	....
Secretary at War	J. C. Herries	....	Viscount Howick	....

CABINET MINISTERS.	1837.	1838.	1839.	1840.
First Lord of the Treasury	Viscount Melbourne	....	....	....
Lord President of the Council	Marquess of Lansdowne	....	....	....
Lord High Chancellor	Lord Cottenham	....	....	....
Lord Privy Seal	Viscount Duncannon	....	....	Earl of Clarendon.
Chancellor of the Exchequer	T. S. Rice	....	F. T. Baring	....
First Lord of the Admiralty	Earl of Minto	....	....	....
Master General of the Ordnance	....	....	....	....
Secretary of State—Home Department	Lord J. Russell	....	Marquess of Normanby	....
,, ,, Foreign Affairs	Viscount Palmerston	....	....	....
,, ,, War and Colonies	Lord Glenelg	....	Lord J. Russell	....
President of Board of Control	Sir J. C. Hobhouse	....	....	....
Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster	Lord Holland	....	....	....
Master of the Mint	....	....	H. Labouchere	....
Treasurer of the Navy	....	....	....	....
President of the Board of Trade	C. P. Thomson	....	H. Labouchere	....
Postmaster General	....	....	....	....
Paymaster of the Forces	....	....	....	....
Chief Secretary for Ireland	....	....	Lord Morpeth	....
Secretary at War	Viscount Howick	....	T. B. Macaulay	....

CABINET MINISTERS.	1841—January.	1841—September.	1842.	1843.
First Lord of the Treasury	Viscount Melbourne	Sir R. Peel	....	....
Lord President of the Council	Marquess of Lansdowne	Lord Wharncliffe	....	....
Lord High Chancellor	Lord Cottenham	Lord Lyndhurst	....	....
Lord Privy Seal	Earl of Clarendon	Duke of Buckingham	Duke of Buccleuch	....
Chancellor of the Exchequer	F. T. Baring	H. Goulburn	....	....
First Lord of the Admiralty	Earl of Minto	Earl of Haddington	....	....
Master General of the Ordnance	....	....	....	....
Secretary of State—Home Department	Marquess of Normanby	Sir J. Graham	....	....
,, ,, Foreign Affairs	Viscount Palmerston	Earl of Aberdeen	....	....
,, ,, War and Colonies	Lord J. Russell	Lord Stanley	....	....
President of the Board of Control	Sir J. C. Hobhouse	Lord Ellenborough	Lord Fitzgerald	....
Master of the Mint	H. Labouchere	....	....	....
President of the Board of Trade	....	Earl of Ripon	....	....
Secretary at War	T. B. Macaulay	Sir H. Hardinge	....	....
Paymaster General	....	Sir E. Knatchbull	....	....
Chief Secretary for Ireland	Lord Morpeth	Lord Eliot	....	....
Commander of the Forces	....	....	....	Duke of Wellington.
Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster	Sir G. Grey	....	....	....
First Commissioner of Land Revenue	Viscount Duncannon	....	....	....
		Duke of Wellington *(without office)*		

CABINET MINISTERS.	1844.	1845.	1846—January to June.	
First Lord of the Treasury	Sir R. Peel	....	....	
Lord President of the Council	Lord Wharncliffe	....	....	
Lord High Chancellor	Lord Lyndhurst	....	....	
Lord Privy Seal	Duke of Buccleuch	....	....	
Chancellor of the Exchequer	H. Goulburn	....	....	
First Lord of the Admiralty	Earl of Haddington	....	....	
Master General of the Ordnance	....	....	....	
Secretary of State—Home Department	Sir J. Graham	....	....	
,, ,, Foreign Affairs	Earl of Aberdeen	....	....	
,, ,, War and Colonies	Lord Stanley	....	....	
President of the Board of Control	Lord Ripon	....	....	
President of the Board of Trade	W. E. Gladstone	....	....	
Secretary at War	Sir H. Hardinge	Sidney Herbert	....	
Chief Secretary for Ireland	Lord Eliot	....	....	
Paymaster of the Forces	Sir E. Knatchbull	....	....	
Commander in Chief	Duke of Wellington	....	....	
Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster	....	Lord G. C. H. Somerset	....	
First Commissioner of Land Revenue	....	Earl of Lincoln	....	
Woods and Forests	....	....	....	
Postmaster General	....	....	....	

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